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THE GOVERNING CYCLE AND

THE DYNAMICS OF NEW MAJORITY FORMATION

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2009

To my beautiful new wife, Jill, and my family.

While it is my name that appears alone as the author of this work, I could not have written this dissertation without the inspiration and assistance of many others. Foremost I would like to acknowledge the role that Jeff Tulis played as chair of my committee. Without the confidence he expressed in me via the latitude given to attempt this ambitious project, it never would have happened. His gentle nudging towards greater clarity and nuance, combined with his patience in the face of my own tendency to advance by repeated frontal assault, were instrumental in improving this work. I would like to also thank the other members of my committee, Bruce Buchanan, Sandy Levinson, Daron Shaw and especially Walter Dean Burnham for their comments and support throughout. As they know, I was able to incorporate ideas I gleaned from each of them in my dissertation, and the final product is much better for it. Two other individuals stand out for special acknowledgment here. This dissertation might not have taken the form it did if not for Dan Franklin and Adam Myers, my conference paper co-authors and go to guys for sounding out ideas. Finally, I thank my wife, Jill Nichols, both for coming into my life and also for supporting me in ways big and small throughout the process of finishing this dissertation. All errors that remain within are my own.

THE GOVERNING CYCLE AND

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2009

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In this dissertation I advance a new, regime style, governing cycle theory to account for the constitutional origins and political dynamics of new majority formation. It is these periodic attempts to reorder politics and overcome conditions of entropy that I argue best account for the broad contours of American political development.

Using a historical institutional approach, I argue that the U.S. Constitution's durable separation of powers design interacts with America's two party system to unintentionally structure political conflict in ways that makes it almost impossible for anyone to address the inevitable build up of entropy in the political system. Recurrently, this challenges partisan leaders to renew politics via the formation of a new governing majority. Partisan leaders accomplish this goal by completing three tasks: 1) shifting the main axis of partisan conflict; 2) assembling a new majority coalition that allows for effective control of federal governing institutions; and, 3) locking-in partisan priorities and advantage through institutionalization of a new governing regime.

Through case study analysis, I demonstrate that the dynamics of new governing majority formation can play out in either a straightforward or a protracted manner depending on whether or not partisan leaders initially succeed or fail to accomplish these tasks. This leads to new interpretations of the crucial "System of 1896" and "Reagan Revolution" cases, which allows me to argue for the superiority of my new cyclical theory and to conclude that the governing cycle contains the American polity's best opportunity to reorder and revitalize itself.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Governing Cycle

"I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions (but) …"

~ Thomas Jefferson (Letter to Samuel Kercheval, 1816)

"God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. … what country can preserve it liberties, if its rulers are not warned from time to time, that the people preserve the spirit of resistance."

~ Thomas Jefferson (Letter to W.S. Smith, 1787)

Narrative Foundations

If for observers like Tocqueville and Hartz the mainsprings of American politics were to be found in the fact that "Americans were born free" and therefore did not have "to endure a democratic revolution," the essential reality of this work is that an almost unchanging United States Constitution has structured (and continues to structure) the dynamics of American politics in unique, and often unintended, ways (2000; 1955: 35). Therefore, one way to describe this dissertation project would be to state that it focuses thematically on how institutional structure influences the course of American political development.

It has been recognized, at least since the days of Montesquieu and Publius, that constitutional structure can greatly impact the type of politics that is practiced in a polity. Modern research has demonstrated that constitutional features – such as separation of powers, presidentialism, staggered terms and elections, and by state / district

representation (which encourages the use of plurality electoral rules) – often are significant because they shape the preferences and motivations of political actors and citizens (March and Olsen 1984) and they establish the "rules of the game" by which politics is played (North 1990). Exactly how these "hard-wired" (Levinson 2006) constitutional features structure politics is the focus of the third chapter's analysis of America's peculiar combination of a two party system and separation of powers.

Another way to describe this dissertation would be to say that it is based on a narrative that scientific minded observers might call: the reoccurring story of overcoming entropy in American politics. This is to say that because the framers of the United States Constitution were so successful in thwarting the perceived threat of democratic disorder, which many felt was embedded in the Articles of Confederation, and created a political system that is stable and resistant to change, they inadvertently created a system that is prone to both producing stasis and drift. As such, the American political system tends to, over time, suffer from (what I will call) "high entropy conditions." If there is anything in this view, then American political development ought to be distinguished by reoccurring struggles to overcome this condition.

This narrative shares affinities with others previously postulated, parts of which I will build off of in this work. The first, enunciated by Walter Dean Burnham in his 1970 classic *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*, will be discussed in detail in the second chapter. He postulates that it is the nearly unchanging nature of American constitutional structure that periodically leads the country to political crisis as the stasis prone political system falls out of synch with the dynamic socio-economic

system. In this formulation, pressure to meet newly emergent issues increase until it eventuates an "electoral earthquake" that realigns the electorate and allows the political system to change. While I ultimately reject the mass electoral focus of this line of research, I extend thought into Burnham's observation that constitutional structure shapes political development. I do so by taking what I will call a "systemic historical institutionalist" perspective to the examination of how the U.S. Constitution structures development. Further, I incorporate into my theory his conception that an enervating gap, between the ends and means of governance, invariably comes to exist. I call this the "capacity gap."

Of course the American founders, especially those deeply imbued with the republican spirit (and thus inclined towards Anti-federalist politics), would recognize my storyline as well. They would probably frame discussion of the trend in terms of cycles of decay and renewal rather than entropy. However, they would undoubtedly be aware of the ease by which legitimacy is lost in governance and see the necessity of "eternal vigilance" in the face of the inevitability of corruption of power. Indeed, Thomas Jefferson, went so far as to (in)famously suggest that periodic revolution might be called for to rectify this problem (1787). While I mostly abandon the republican language of virtue and corruption in this dissertation, I do extend thought into this theory's observation that cyclical dynamics are best thought of in terms of decay and renewal. I do so by exploring what brings about high entropy conditions, while seeking to answer how these conditions can be overcome. Further, I incorporate into my theory the recognition a gap, between the priorities of those in power and the priorities of the

majority, invariably comes to exist. I call this the "legitimacy gap," which in many ways also resembles Huntington's conception of the values / practice gap (1981).

All of these narratives are insightful, and useful, and will be deployed throughout this dissertation to help describe and explain empirical realities. However, narratives are not the central focus of this dissertation. Instead, this project is, at core, an empirical study that attempts to answer the following: 1) what are the systemic causes of the periodic build up of entropy in the American polity; 2) what tasks are necessary to accomplish to overcome high entropy conditions, once they have arrived; and 3) what are the consequences of failing to accomplish these tasks? This is, therefore, an investigation into the constitutional origins of the macro patterns of American political development. It is a study of the dynamics of new governing majority formation, and the reordering of politics that is postulated to lower entropy and rejuvenate the polity. Finally, it is a study of both straightforward and protracted pathways development in the wake of efforts to reorder. The design of my research is longitudinal and comparative in conception, employing a mixed-method approach that concentrates upon on the internal dynamics of the American political system's propensity to cycle through new governing majorities over time. Ultimately, then, this is a dissertation about the governing cycle and the dynamics of new majority formation.

Evidence of the Governing Cycle

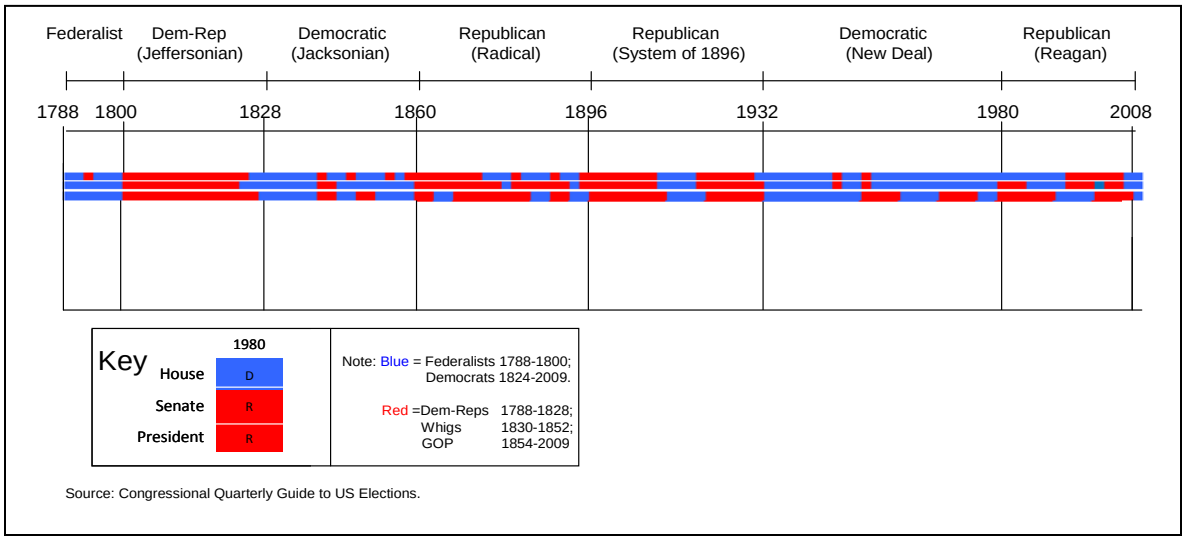
The term governing cycle is of new coinage. In fact, while governing cycle theory draws from and ends up synthesizing aspects from other influential cyclical

scholarship,[1] nothing yet exists on the theory exactly as it is articulated here. Therefore, a number of definitional and conceptual clarifications, as well as some discussion of empirical evidence and approach to analysis, are needed to start this dissertation.

First, the term governing cycle will narrowly (and literally) refer to the dynamic that leads to the rise and fall of national governing majorities. This suggests that a sequence of events – relating to this rise and fall – is witnessed within each cycle before the sequence repeats itself. Therefore, a governing cycle also corresponds to a unit of time that is analogous to a full turn of a seasonal year. This means that governing cycles must be conceptually distinguished from the value / mood, electoral, policy, leadership, and constitutional cycles that other scholarship has focused on. While there ought to be relationships between the governing cycle and these other cycles, and part of the significance of this study is how it brings together many elements of other cyclical theories, the distinctness of the governing cycle is important. Indeed, the final, and perhaps the most significant aspect of the governing cycle is how it may more holistically account for some of the other cycles – by playing the role of master mechanism of change in American political development.

Figure 1.1 provides reasonable initial evidence that American political development has witnessed the sequential rise and fall of governing majorities. This is the pattern that is to be explained by this dissertation and is expected to be produced by the workings of the governing cycle. It graphically depicts a measure of partisan control of the House, Senate, and Presidency starting with the first elected Congress in 1788 and going through today's 111th Congress.

Figure 1.1
The Governing Cycle: Control of the House, Senate, and Presidency as Evidence of the Sequential Rise and Fall of Governing Majorities



As the key suggests, each congress is represented by three vertical cells that have been colored to represent which party controlled each congressional chamber and the presidential office. As is represented in the 1980 example, the Democrats (blue / light gray) controlled the House of Representatives (top cell), while the Republicans (red / dark gray) controlled the Senate (middle cell) and Presidency (bottom cell). While the Democrats are always depicted in blue / light gray and the Republicans are always red / dark gray, colors do not otherwise represent continuity of a particular party or ideology, as Federalists are also depicted with blue / light gray and Whigs and Jeffersonian Democratic-Republicans are also represented by red / dark gray.

The multi-hued array across the top-middle of Figure 1.1 depicts partisan control of the House, Senate, and Presidency across the entire two hundred and twenty year history of the United States under its present constitution. Within this array, the three

vertical cells for each Congress have been placed side by side. They are separated along breakpoints that suggest a new governing majority rose at that time. The year of these cut-points are listed above, along with the majority governing coalition of the era.

With conjecture that the Reagan Republican era is coming to a close in 2009, it is thus the starting contention of this project that there have been seven swings of the governing cycle in American history. Figure 1.1 suggests that five out of the seven eras of "governing majority dominance"[2] have been distinguished by obvious and straightforward shifts from one governing majority to another (Federalist, Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, Radical Republican, New Deal). This set of cases therefore ought to most clearly demonstrate the internal dynamics of the governing cycle, especially at the critical point near the end of one cycle and the beginning of another – when a new governing majority is formed. I look more closely at these "typical cases" in chapter four (Brady and Collier 2004).

The remaining "System of 1896" and "Reagan Revolution" cases are not nearly as clear cut, appearing to be examples of protracted processes that followed in the wake of initial failures to reorder. It may therefore be both more problematic, elucidatory, and therefore "crucial," to establishment of new theory, to look at these cases (Gerring 2001). I do so in chapter five. The decision to analyze and reinterpret these cases is inspired as much from debate within other cyclical literatures, as it is from Chart 1.1's initial evidence.[3] These two cases have (rightly or wrongly) come to exemplify instances of events that previous cyclical theories fail to explain adequately. Therefore, if the results of the analysis and reinterpretation of these least-likely cases show that they are

unexpectedly positive (conforming to new theory) and can be explained by the same cyclical dynamics as the other five cases – despite being somewhat different in outer form – this is good evidence for two things. First, the new theory advanced in this dissertation is superior to other cyclical explanations of these events and, second, past critiques of these theories can be rejected as applicable to governing cycle theory.

Further support for these conclusions is provided in chapter six, where I use quantitative analysis to conduct the second phase of my mixed-methods research design. Here I use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis to test the validity of my historical research. I do this by examining the determinates of presidential ranking scores, and using the results of my case studies and interpretive work to operationalize the key explanatory variable, *entropy*, within this study. If the results of this analysis demonstrate that entropy is both a statistically and substantively significant predictor of the final scores given by experts in the C-SPAN 2009 Presidential Ranking Survey, this would suggest that both my historical work is correct and my governing cycle theory is generalizable to all of American political development.

Origins and Dynamics of the Cycle

Since it is argued that there are constitutional origins to the reoccurring problem of rising entropy, which is literally the measure of a system's inability to perform work, it should not surprise that I claim that the internal dynamics of the governing cycle – and the rise and fall of new governing majorities – are also thought to be shaped by constitutional structure. Indeed, as chapter two will foreshadow and as chapter three will

demonstrate, the cycle itself stems from the interaction between two unique features of American politics: the two party system and separation of powers. It is well recognized that having a political system, which dichotomizes options, tends to create broad coalitional majority and opposition parties (Duverger 1972).[4] Likewise, it is well known (but often underappreciated) that part of what separation of powers does is to prevent the majority from easily (or quickly) being swept from control over governing institutions (Federalist Papers).

Both aspects reinforce each other, producing stable governing majorities that inevitably, and unintentionally, lead to increasing entropy within the American political system. Separation of powers also affords great advantages to the first partisan group that gains effective control over the House, Senate, and Presidency – those institutions with veto power over the legislative process. Such control of government allows the initial majority to establish an "institutional regime" (of institutions, programs, and relationships) that furthers their priorities and political advantage. Because of separation of powers, it is then relatively easy for the majority to defend their institutionalized status quo and continue to accrue its rewards. For this reason, dominance can be maintained by the establishing majority without unified control of government. Dominance is, however, greatly threatened by the opposition gaining unified control.

At the macro level, political competition is thus structured to revolve around control of the governing institutions depicted in Figure 1.1. This impacts the political behavior of both the opposition and the majority. Because of the difficulty opposition forces have in gaining control over all three governing institutions – once a status quo has

been established – the opposition soon finds incentive to blur their distinctiveness. Rather than running on a clearly contrasting alternative program, the opposition relies on using temporary fatigue and socio-economic setbacks, along with its outsider status, and local advantages to remain electorally competitive. This gives the opposition no strong mandate for change – if and when they do capture control of governing institutions – thereby contributing to the short-lived nature of opposition lead unified governments.

Furthermore, the opposition's normal lack of success in controlling governing institutions leads them to resort to using separation of powers to both force legislative compromise and to simply delay and obstruct the majority. This "irresponsible" party behavior obscures accountability, further eroding incentives for programmatic partisan distinctiveness (APSA report). These reinforcing dynamics make the opposition coalition into an electoral and legislative "us too" party, while quickly transforming the insurgent, problem solving, new governing majority into an aging, status quo protecting, governing majority that is forced to focus its ebbing energy on maintaining its control over governing institutions.

The majority's struggle to maintain control of government is complicated, in predictable ways, by the broad coalitional nature of the American two party system. In short, a dozen or so years after establishing their dominance, the majority tends to become pressured by the resurgence of an irresponsible political opposition. This threatens the majority's control of governing institutions and causes a counter mobilization, wherein secondary factional groups within the majority coalition are appealed to for the extra energy needed to restore control over at least some governing

institutions. These energetic tactics almost always work in the short run, returning control of governing institutions to the majority. However, in the mid-term these tactics strain coalition cohesion, leading to drift and stasis that enervates governmental responses to newly emergent issues while skewing governing priorities more towards the extreme. The political system then begins to appear to lack the "capacity" to meet new challenges and to suffer from extreme, constitution threatening, and therefore "illegitimate" governance. The appearance of these capacity and legitimacy "gaps" signals high entropy conditions have arrived.

In each governing cycle the citizens and politicians of the era may define exactly what high entropy conditions "look like" slightly differently – given differences between previous achievements, coalitional arrangements, the nature of pressing problems, and the difficulties that must be overcome in meeting them. However, the concept of entropy does imply a foundation within a set of intractable socio-economic and coalitional / political problems that can and will be empirically measureable – even if they are historically relative measures. Finally, it is argued that the term entropy is more conceptually robust and evokes a narrative that is more accurate than others previously used in the cyclical literature.[5]

At this point in the cycle, what appears especially relevant – given the connection between status quo protecting governing majorities and the rise of high entropy conditions – is that it is necessary for political leaders and party builders to create a new governing majority to reorder politics, lower entropy, and restart the cycle. Therefore, the bulk of this dissertation grapples with this topic, and I focus on the tasks that bring

about the rise of a new governing majority – ending one governing cycle and beginning another.

Indeed, once the historically contingent moment of high entropy conditions arrives, the opposition gains incentive to begin repudiating the majority in an attempt to gain control of governing institutions for themselves. This more "responsible" partisan behavior by political leaders elites causes entropy to further spike as politics is driven into crisis by the intense focus on capacity and legitimacy gaps. When this spike occurs, a "critical juncture," or widow of opportunity that gives greater range to creative agency, is arrived at. I call this opening the "reordering opportunity" and suggest that it provides the space for the three individually necessary and jointly sufficient tasks (required to create a new governing majority and end crisis like high entropy conditions) to be completed. Until this occurs, either by straightforward or protracted pathways of success, the polity will remain in crisis and political leaders will continue to be challenged to form a new governing majority.

Previous theory suggests that the key to creating a new governing majority is to change what the era's central political conflict is about (Schattschneider 1960). This usually entails changing what the opposition party stands for in a way that undercuts support for the majority party and adds new supporters to the opposition's ranks (Petrocik 1981; Sundquist 1983; Miller and Schofield 2003; 2008). This shifts the main "axis of partisan conflict," the imaginary line of cleavage that splits the electorate and separates contending groups into rival partisan camps that are themselves united around shared priorities, worldview, and issue / policy area preferences (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

Shifting the main axis of partisan conflict is thought central to the formation of a new governing majority because only change in control over federal governing institutions, over the long haul, is thought to allow the level of political reordering needed to lower entropy. Shifting the axis of conflict is therefore a precursor to, and part of, the assembly of disparate social groups into a broad, new, majority coalition that allows effective control over all governing institutions and returns legitimacy to the majority coalition. Once a new governing majority gains this control, it attempts to use its governing powers to institutionalize its new preferences and approaches to policy questions. This institutionalization responds, in new ways, to the seemingly intractable problems, bringing capacity more in line with needs and legitimizing the new majority. It also can be used by the new majority to help to secure their electoral advantage. If the new governing majority is successful in these things, then politics is said to be reordered. Entropy is then lowered by this reorganization and the polity should be renewed and reenergized. The governing cycle has then swung from end to beginning.

Argument is thus made that there are three individually necessary and jointly sufficient tasks that political leaders are required to succeed in to create a new governing majority. They are:

1) shift the main axis of partisan conflict;
2) assemble a new majority coalition that allows effective control of federal governing institutions, and;
3) institutionalize a new governing regime.

These tasks are the core of a model of new governing majority formation that is used to guide typical case study analysis and matching interpretations in chapter four. This model is further developed to account for the possibility that political leaders can fail in their initial efforts to create a new governing majority. This further development of the model is used to investigate crucial cases in chapter five.

Contingency, Agency, and the Possibility of Failure

In any structural centered account of a political phenomenon it is perhaps easy to lose sight of the role that historical contingency and political agency play in the dynamic. This tendency also exists, and may therefore be reinforced, when the subject of examination is thought to be governed by cyclical dynamics. Indeed, in previous attempts to understand political cycles, the failure to fully account for contingency and agency have stood out. This problem is avoided in this project through its methodological emphasis on conceptual clarity and causal specificity. Governing cycles are thus, first, conceived of as probabilistic and not deterministic in nature. Second, the possibility of failure within the dynamic is accounted for.

Cyclical accounts of social phenomenon have commonly been criticized for their "deterministic" character. These criticisms may very well be justified against many macro-level cyclical theories of social change (for example see: Spengler, 1928) – whose "theoretical grasp often exceeds their empirical reach" (Resnick and Thomas, 1990). However, these criticisms may not always generalize to mid-range theories, like that which applies to the governing cycle. Further, what is often forgotten is that a cycle can

be probabilistic as well as deterministic. A cycle is probabilistic when it consists of a sequence of events that increase the likelihood of some outcome occurring before the sequence repeats itself. This must be distinguished from a cycle that is deterministic and has a fixed periodicity that predicts exactly when an outcome will occur before the series begins again.

Two examples of cycles from the natural world bear this distinction out. Seasonal cycles are probabilistic. Thus, wintertime, or that season of the year in the temperate regions of the Earth when the coldest days are witnessed, begins sometime around December (in the northern hemisphere). This occurrence is based on a probabilistic cycle that does not lend itself to exact prediction. However, with rare exceptions, the sequence of days with shortening exposure to less direct sunlight eventually produces the season we all recognize as wintertime. Contrastingly, a sidereal cycle, or the time it takes the Earth to complete one rotation relative to the vernal equinox, can be considered deterministic. A sidereal day has a fixed periodicity of 23.934 solar hours. The gravitational and orbital forces at work in this phenomenon predictably determine why all distant stars takes about three minutes and fifty-six seconds less, per day, than the sun to reach their highest point in the sky.

The governing cycle is probabilistic and NOT deterministic precisely because the rise of a new governing majority is premised on a dynamic in which structural constraints sequentially lead to the high entropy conditions that inspires political leaders to form a new governing majority. Contingencies and agency can therefore accelerate or retard the progress of the cycle. In a normally functioning probabilistic cycle, these factors should

only marginally impact the increasing probability that these problems will eventually be encountered and met.[6] Contingency and agency are thus given a broad role to play within the governing cycle dynamic though the conceptualization of the cycle as probabilistic. However, greater causal specificity is needed to explain how truly significant these factors can sometimes be.

Greater causal specificity is accomplished by accounting for the *possibility of failure* within the dynamics of new governing majority formation. These sort of failures are defined as occurring at the critical point, during the reordering opportunity, when crisis like high entropy conditions are present and political leaders fail to accomplish all (three) of the tasks required to form a new governing majority. Regardless of whether this failure occurs because of unforeseen contingencies, like an economic depression simultaneously happening, or because poor leadership is practiced, politics fail to be reordered. These failures must therefore be thought to increase entropy and keep the reordering opportunity open for other political leaders to accomplish the three tasks. In these instances, it seems quite possible that the formation of a new governing majority could proceed along more protracted pathways of development, which complicate the accomplishment of the three tasks and lead to somewhat anomalous outcomes.

If there is any merit to the possibility of failure, then the historical record ought to demonstrate that there are two basic variations of the pattern of new governing majority formation. Those that follow the pathway of straightforward success ought to be characterized by sudden and decisive shifts in partisan control over governing institutions; where former opposition parties quickly exchange places with past majority

parties. As a result of this rapid reversal of fortunes, some forms of institutionalization may exhibit a more "punctuated" character as politics takes a sudden and decisive turn.[7] This "pathway of straightforward success" scenario is the pattern that the typical cases, like Jackson's, are expected to conform to.

New governing majorities that follow a pathway that includes at least one sequence of failure might not be characterized by as sudden, or as decisive, of shifts in partisan control over governing institutions. Indeed, two scenarios including a failure sequence are possible. In the first scenario, after failure the opposition party might loose the initiative to form a new majority coalition back to the majority party. This could occur if the opposition were to shift the main axis of partisan cleavage in such a way that it deepened their minority status. This would then require the old governing majority to take advantage of this rare opportunity and "make itself new" by assembling a new majority coalition itself. This new majority coalition would then have to (re)institutionalize the governing regime – both to pursue its coalition's expanded interests and to meet capacity and legitimacy gaps. In this case, there would not be a change in the partisan identity of the new governing majority, only changes in its coalitional make up and in the direction / rate of change of institutionalization. Given the greater continuity maintained in this scenario, this institutional change may appear muted, drawn out, and unsuccessful in comparison to the cases that follow a straightforward pathway of success. Nevertheless, if the three tasks are completed and high entropy conditions are overcome, the governing cycle will have come full swing.

This scenario of protracted success is exactly the one that will be argued best describes the "System of 1896" governing cycle case.

A second scenario includes the possibility that more than one failure sequence can occur in a row. This scenario would exhibit an elongated period of high entropy conditions before the opposition party is able to form a new governing majority. In such cases, the shifting of the main axis of partisan conflict, the assembly of a new majority coalition, and / or institutionalization of a new governing regime might occur by very drawn out processes. If, in the end, the opposition party finally completed the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority they still might find themselves in a much more tenuous governing situation. Not only could their control over governing institutions be more narrow (limiting their legislative power), but they could inherit an institutional regime that has, during the elongated interregnum, grown in the opposite direction of the new majority coalition's preferences. Nevertheless, if – once again – the three tasks are eventually completed and high entropy conditions are overcome, the governing cycle has come full swing. This less straightforward scenario is exactly the one that will be presented as a new interpretation of the "Reagan Revolution" governing cycle case.

The Virtues of a New Path

A new path is pursued in this dissertation. Rather than just extending theory made familiar in other cyclical theories, namely the realignment (Key, 1955; Burnham, 1970; Sundquist, 1983) and political time paradigms (Skowronek, 1993; Crockett, 2002;

Cook and Polsky, 2005), new categories are self-consciously created, leaving the old to become alternate explanations. This is done for a number of reasons.

First, and most importantly, a new theory is required conceptually. The greater emphasis on institutional foundations redefines the reoccurring problem of American political development as one of overcoming entropy. This, in turn, shifts the focus of analysis away from electoral behavior, critical elections, and presidential power, and focuses it squarely on the dynamics of new governing majority formation. In governing cycle theory, electoral cleavages, majority coalitions, and institutional change remain central. However, they are looked at from a top down perspective that is mostly missing from the realignment synthesis and examined from a holistic view that is mostly missing from political time theory. New theory is needed to fully investigate the unintended consequences of constitutional structure.

New theory is also able to draw from the latest "neo-institutional" scholarship in more depth and breadth than the old theories did (March and Olsen, 1984; Hall and Taylor, 1996), which is especially relevant in understanding the roles that constitutional structure and institutional change play in the governing cycle. For example, the rational choice neo-institutional literature brings a unique comparative perspective on "institutional veto points" to bear on how American separation of powers impacts the dynamics of new governing majority formation (Immergut, 1992; Tsebelis, 1995, 2002). This suggests that the opposition must effectively capture unified control over government to reorder politics when almost everything about the structure of the American system makes this difficult.

Additionally, the historical neo-institutional literature better helps to explain the dynamics of institutionalization.[8] For example, studies conducted on the character of change (Pierson 2003) suggest that realignment's previous focus on the "punctuated equilibrium" model of change unnecessarily undercuts the theory (Eldridge and Gould 1972; Burnham, 1999). Similarly, other new findings – like those on how institutions evolve by conversion as well as path dependent processes (Thelen 2003; Pierson 2000b) – help to correct for regime theory's over emphasis on institutional "layering," which led to a premature announcement that history – as political time – was ending (Skowronek, 1993). Indeed, my neo-instituional approach suggests that to the extent that the welfare state is causing political time to "wane" this must be thought of as a serious problem, which threatens self-determination by creating permanent high entropy conditions.

New theory is also needed to surmount past controversies over the crucial "System of 1896" and "Long Dealignment / Reagan Revolution" cases. In providing theory that accounts for failure within its dynamic, the new governing cycle paradigm overcomes both the greatest criticisms against realignment theory (Shafer 1991; Mayhew 2002) and political time's own problems with these cases (see Nichols and Myer forthcoming). This suggests that critiques applying to the old theories do not apply to the new theory. Additionally, the fact that the governing cycle uses the same logic to explain these cases, as it does the typical ones, suggests that new theory has more explanatory power than the old.

Accounting for failure additionally brings the role of contingency and agency into the forefront of developmental studies. This is accomplished in governing cycle theory

by conceiving of reordering in terms of tasks that are necessary for political leaders to accomplish. This increases the relevance of new theory for practitioners and citizens alike. Indeed, understanding the governing cycle may be especially important today, as evidence of the resurgence of high entropy conditions point toward the end of the Reagan Revolution era. Only new theory speaks to what today's political leaders must succeed in accomplishing to form a new governing majority; and only theory formulated this way can help us think about what happens if they fail.[9]

Finally, while it is important to acknowledge the great intellectual debt owed to the many scholars whose work inspired this dissertation,[10] it is also relevant to note that it is a sign of scholarly health to attempt to move beyond mere critique and rejoinder. As Louis Hartz once wrote:

> … you merely demonstrate your subservience to a thinker when you spend your time attempting to disprove him. The way to fully refute a man is to ignore him for the most part, and the only way you can do this is to substitute new fundamental categories for his own, so that you are simply pursuing a different path (1955: 28).

This dissertation attempts to do just this – moving out of the shadows of the broad shouldered giants that have come before this author – on a new path.

In final summary, however, this project should not be thought of as a break with the past as much as it should be thought of in terms of what Orren and Skowronek might call a newly informed "doubling back" – to follow up on unexplored possibilities (2004). Given both the scourging that the realignment synthesis has received and the well

documented “unraveling” of the very idea that “anything worthy of the term *development* occurred in American politics” (Orren and Skowronek, 2004: 75-76, italics in original), a project like this seems absolutely necessary.

This dissertation is thus used to counter the charge that political science has given up on big, important, questions within the field. With it, I fill a void by arguing that American political development is cyclically tied to rising entropy and the need to overcome high entropy conditions through new governing majority formation. This links the concept of development to success in responding to recurrent structurally induced capacity and legitimacy problems, and should shift debate away from past existential squabbles about cycles in American politics. Instead I hope to refocus discussion on the (small-r) republican concern that the health of the polity cannot be maintained without the self-determination that the governing cycle dynamic provides America and its leaders to successfully respond to episodic challenges.

[1] In a review of the literature, Resnick and Thomas (1990) divide the cyclical scholarship into three overlapping and often related categories. They identify Huntington (1981) and Schlesinger (1986) as amongst the most representative of research done on "value cycles." To this list I would add Stimson's work on public opinion / mood cycles (1991). They identify Key (1955), Burnham (1970), and Sundquist (1983) as the main developers of the "electoral cycles" literature. No discussion of their electoral "realignment paradigm" would now be complete without mention of Shafer (1991) and Mayhew's (2002) critiques, as well as Miller and Schofield's (2003; 2008) refinements (see also Brewer and Stonecash 2009). Finally, the reviewers cram a number of disparate works into a category they call "governing cycles." They place Klingberg's (1952) work on foreign policy cycles, Hargrove and Nelson (1984) and Skowronek's (1993) presidential leadership centered cycles, and Goldstein's (1988) long-wave / war cycle under the same rubric. It thus seems likely that Ackerman's (1991) study of constitutional cycles should be included here as well.

In this dissertation, a "governing cycle" is more literally tied to a governing majority's dominance over the federal government.

[2] Note I do not use the terms "party system" (Chambers and Burnham, 1967) or "political regime" (Skowronek, 1993) when referring to an era of majority coalition dominance. Although somewhat analogous to these conceptions both terms have drawbacks for this research. The party system conception is less helpful in conceptualizing and guiding analysis prior to the rise of organized national political parties in the 1830s. The concept of political regime is more appropriate in this aspect. However, it then fails to take the partisan nature and coalitional aspect of governing majorities explicitly into account. Perhaps Polsky's (1997; 2002) formulation of "partisan regime" begins to capture some of this, but it is still in development and incomplete (2009).

[3] Within the electoral realignment cycle literature, debate has recently centered on the existence of what Key (1955); Schattschneider (1960); Burnham (1970); Sundquist (1983) and Miller and Schofield (2003) agree should be called the "System of 1896" (however see Mayhew, 2002). Earlier criticism focused on the failed prediction of a realignment to materialize in the 1960s (Shafer, 1991). The political time, leadership cycle, literature has also denied the existence of a "System of 1896" and argued (somewhat awkwardly) that Ronald Reagan's election both launched a new era and signals the end of the cyclical dynamic (Skowronek, 1993).

[4] Duverger's Law reflects how simple-majority first-past-the-post (SMFPTP) electoral rules dichotomize vote choice by creating a "wasted vote" syndrome. Simply, any vote not for the second place finisher is a vote for the winner. The U.S. House of Representatives apportionment scheme, which is by individual state (in proportion to the national population), has traditionally, legislatively, and judicially been read to imply by district representation that guarantees the use of SMFPTP rules. While there have been notable cases of at-large House districting plans used throughout American history, multi-member districting (necessary for proportional representation) were always rare and have not been used since the 1840s. The effect of staggering Senate elections into three classes (with no state, normally having more than one Senator up for reelection at any one time) guarantees the use of SMFPTP rules here as well. Finally, the effect of strong, unitary, presidentialism also tends to dichotomize political options by creating pro and anti administration legislative blocks.

[5] Burnham's realignment paradigm is explicitly ground in a "disequilibrium" narrative that emphasizes how "critical elections" are the pressure management mechanism between a static political system and a dynamic socio-economic system. This produces expectations for "punctuated change" (Burnham, 1999) that can be resistant to empirical verification. Skowronek's political time formulation is explicitly ground in a "presidential power" narrative that comes to emphasize how disruptive presidential agency leads to context (affiliation with the political regime and perhaps this regime's strength) which in turn shapes agency. However, because affiliation is dichotomous rather than multi-dimensional (and coalitional) in

conceptualization and regime strength appears to have no independent measure, his theory has difficulty explaining the least-likely cases. Miller and Schofield's extension of realignment theory is implicitly ground in an "endogenous change" narrative that explicitly emphasizes how rational, electoral minded, pursuit of activist support in a multi-dimensional political universe causes the cycle to turn (2003; 2008). Its account of the 'how' is much more sophisticated that its ability to explain the 'what' or 'when,' producing expectations against dynamic change that are hard to square with the historical record. Republican narratives of corruption are extremely resistant to empirical measurement. Indeed, Huntington's focus on "creedal passions" hypothesizes that mass perceptions / cognitive dissonance are the reality that drive cycles (1981).

[6] Skowronek has argued that his political time cycle may be "waning" due to a general institutional "thickening of the state" (1993). If correct, contingencies have made his cycle "sickly" and retarded the role that agency can play within it.

[7] As institutionalization is thought to be a response to high entropy conditions, it should vary in accordance to the magnitude and depth of challenges associated with this, i.e.: capacity and legitimacy gaps. Additionally, as institutionalization is thought to relate to shifting governing outputs to favor the priorities of the new majority coalition, it should vary in relation to the shift in the main axis of conflict. Finally, institutionalization may be hampered or accelerated by contingent events.

[8] See Steinmo, Thelen and Longstreth (1992) and Mayhoney and Rueschemeyer (2003) for excellent edited volumes on the "historical institutionalist" strain.

[9] This illuminates an ongoing debate in the literature between those who view political agency as "leadership" (see Miroff, 2007), and those who view it in terms of "entrepreneurship" (see Sheingate, 2003). It appears Skowronek sides with the entrepreneurial interpretation, while I clearly side with the leadership conception in building my theory.

[10] Among the most influential works inspiring this dissertation are: Schattschneider, 1960; Burnham, 1970; Axelrod, 1972; Clubb, Flanagan, and Zingale, 1980; Petrocik, 1981; Sundquist, 1983; Tulis, 1986; Shafer, 1991; Skowronek, 1993; Aldrich, 1995; Plotke, 1996; Mayhew, 2002; Polsky, 2002; and, Orren and Skowronek, 2004.

Chapter 2: Antecedents and Approaches

"It is the theory which decides what we can observe."[1] ~ Albert Einstein

This chapter explores the cyclical theory antecedents and scholarly approaches are used to inform the exposition of governing cycle theory. The chapter thus sets up my later exploration of the origins and dynamics of the governing cycle. In it I, first, review the literature on cycles in American politics. This convinces me to argue that constitutional configuration best accounts for the pattern of alternating governing majorities witnessed in the historical record. Specifically, I examine six theories. I split these cyclical theories into pairs based on the degree to which they trace the origins of their cycles back to constitutional foundations. Along this dimension of analysis, two of the theories reviewed are ungrounded in constitutional foundations, two are agnostic or weakly grounded, while two are being explicitly grounded. By surveying the literature in this way, I review some of what has come before, highlight some of what critics have said, and identify a gap at the end of the continuum.

Ultimately I argue that the cyclical line of scholarship (no pun intended) is in disarray. Lack of conceptual clarity, causal specificity, and engagement between theories has lead to incomplete, and sometimes shallow, theorizing about the origins and dynamics of cycles. This has lead to difficult cases and failed predictions that have given the critics the upper hand in debates and resulted in the idea that there are trends in the historical record that no cyclical theory can account for or overcome. This dissertation is

partially written as a response to these problems, and in this chapter I identify both common problems with past theories and promising avenues of advance.

Avenues of advance are further explored in the second part of this chapter, where I suggest that a gap exists at the end of the theoretical continuum in explaining the origins of cycles in American politics. This gap can be filled through theorizing that is: explicitly "historical institutional" in being especially attuned to the role the Constitution plays in structuring political conflict and impacting political development, and; more self-consciously (and consistently) "systemic" in its view – concerning itself with the interconnectedness of parts and whole. I thus take a more self-consciously "systemic historical institutional" approach to investigating the governing cycle and provide of an initial – and tentative – outline of what it means to be engaged in just such an endeavor.

By taking this theoretical approach, I aim to return focus onto the question of why there are cycles in the first place and to redirect the line of inquiry away from ungrounded, agnostic, and institutionally partisan accounts of cycles. This sets the stage for the third chapter, where I attempt to make the different strands of cyclical theory stop talking past one another. The role that the U.S. Constitution unintentionally plays in shaping political conflict is made clear, and I contend that the United States' unique separation of powers system is responsible for giving shape to the dynamic by structuring two party political competition in ways that "lock in" governing majorities and sequentially lead to high entropy conditions. Once this happens, incentives change for opposition political leaders. An opportunity arises for them to form the new governing majority that both reorders politics and lowers entropy.

I then am able to present a schematic model of the governing cycle and flow chart the key sequences within it. These suggest that the key to the cyclical dynamic is succeeding in the tasks necessary to form a new governing majority. It is the straightforward creation of a new governing majority that both brings energy back into the high entropy political system and, ironically, puts the system on its own inevitable pathway back to increasing entropy. However, theory also suggests that it is possible for politicians to fail to form new governing majorities. When this happens, entropy increases, reordering is complicated, development proceeds by protracted pathways, and unexpected outcomes can occur.

I then use the new flow chart model, in the forth and fifth chapters, to guide analysis and reinterpretation of cases of new governing majority formation. One case I look at, the Jacksonian, is typical of the phenomenon and demonstrates the ability of new theory to account for multiple cases other cyclical theories have already explained. The other case, the "System of 1896," is highly contentious and crucial for providing evidence in support of governing cycle theory. After this, I conduct quantitative analysis of presidential rankings to determine if the key variable, *entropy*, is a significant predictor of presidential ranking total scores. This tests the validity of my historical work and provides evidence in support of the generalizability of governing cycle theory to all of American political development. It also provides me an avenue to test the superiority of my theory. This leads me to conclusions about the usefulness of governing cycle theory to presidential studies, as well as to considerations about the role that new governing majority formation plays in periodically rejuvenating the health of the polity.

Theoretical Antecedents

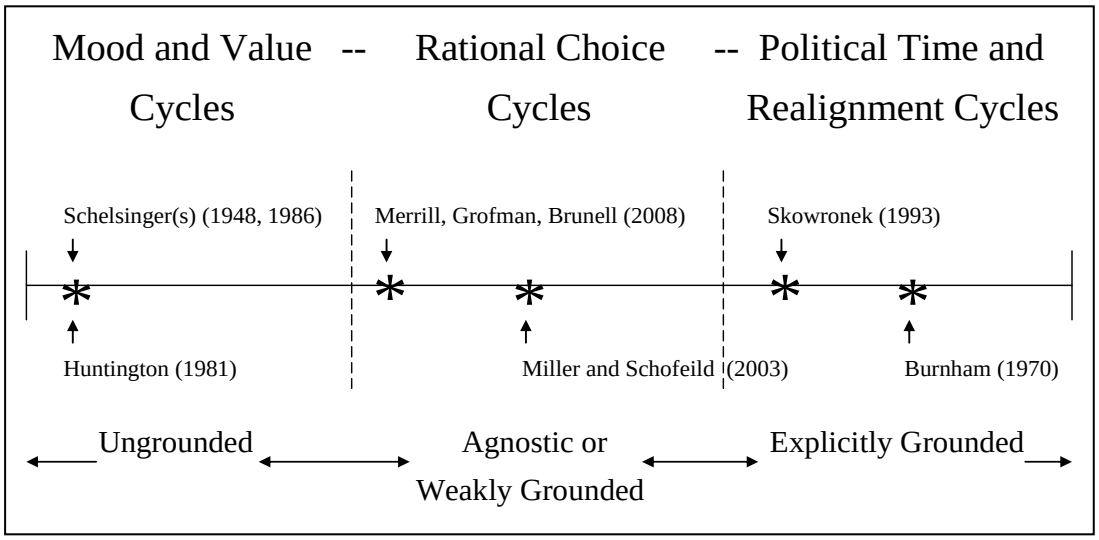
Most cyclical theories of American politics fail to ground themselves in a systemic orientation that explicitly looks to constitutional foundations. Value and Mood cycle theories trace the source of cycles to other causal mechanisms (Huntington 1981; Schelsinger 1986). Rational choice inspired cyclical theories appear agnostic to or are weakly linked to the Constitution (Merrill, Grofman, and Brunell 2008; Miller and Schofield 2003, 2008). Political time theory is institutionally partisan, focusing almost exclusively on an Article II derived – presidential centered – account of cycles (Skowronek 1993). Finally, realignment theory is explicitly ground in, but unconsistently focused on, constitutional origins (Burnham 1970). I'll therefore start this partial review of the cyclical literature by moving from those that are least grounded in constitutional links to those that are most explicitly grounded here. In the process, I'll briefly examine these six theories by organizing them into three groups categorized along a continuum by "first causes."[2] These categories are: 1) theories not ground themselves in constitutional structure; 2) theories agnostic to or weakly grounded in constitutional structure, and; 3) theories that are explicitly ground in constitutional structure (see Figure 2.1 below).

Ungrounded Theories

Especially noteworthy examples of theories that do not ground themselves in constitutional structure are those that derive from and look at mood or value cycles. The most famous are those of the Schlesingers (1949, 1986) and the late Samuel Huntington (1981). Their theories are ideational / cultural in essence and work through mass

psychological processes. Each theory is an insightful product of an undoubtedly encyclopedic mind, however, critics contend that both theories lack clear enough causal specifics to be predictive while doing damage to historical realities.

Figure 2.1
Estimated Positions of Cyclical Theories Along a Constitutionally Grounded Analysis Continuum



The Schlesingers' (father and son) generated mood theory is perhaps the most famous of its type.[3] It holds that the ebb and flow of national politics is driven by alternating impulses toward "public" and "private" involvement. Each swing of the national priorities pendulum finds its origins in discontent with the previous stage. Furthermore, each lasts about 12 to 14 years, creating a cycle that turns full circle generationally (1986: 23-48).

Amongst this theory's critics, there is some consensus that Arthur Schelsinger Jr.'s devotion to liberal causes may have "jaded and distorted his understanding of the past" (Depoe 1994; McDaniel 1999: 542).[4] His theory does appear to harbor a liberal teleology that reads the cycles of history as the on again and off again story of "the continuing accretion of democratic reform."[5] This narrative requires the questionable casting of the sometimes patently illiberal Andrew Jackson as champion of "public" interest.[6] Furthermore, the theory provides faint ex post theorizing as to why a cycle, which relies on discontent and generational replacement as the mechanisms which drives the upward swing of public interest roughly every 30 years, sometimes "misses" – like it did in both the 1890s and 1990s (1986: 45-47).

Huntington's theory stresses how mass level cognitive dissonance and periodic eruptions of "creedal passions" close the gap between American ideals / values and actual political practice. These eruptions seem to require a sixty or seventy year build up of abused of power and are specifically sparked by exogenous socio-economic, demographic, and / or cultural events. The origins of the whole cycle can be traced back to the existence of a Puritan credo that sequentially generates awareness of the gap (139-166). I extensively modify these conceptions, but will argue that a similar "legitimacy gap" opens as entropy increases.

Critics contend that Huntington's theory suffers by narrowly indentifying the American creed with only the "individualistic antigovernment elements in the American tradition." In doing so he ignores "those aspects of the tradition that place a positive value on government action and community" (Beer, 1981; Nichols: 1983: 151).[7] His

theory thus, fails to account for the Civil War and New Deal eras with his conception of reform. Finally, in relying on context, contingency, and changes in mass consciousness to drive a cycle that derives from America's Puritan heritage, Huntington also leaves elite leadership out of his dynamic and concludes that even he isn't sure that his every 60 to 70 year occurring cycle will repeat itself.

Agnostic or Weakly Grounded Theories

The next category along the continuum of cyclical theories are those that appear to be agnostic or weakly theorized as to the role the Constitution plays in the origins of cyclical dynamics. Two recent examples, both drawing on insights from the rational choice school of research, stand out. The agnostic theory is that of Merrill, Grofman, and Brunell (2008) and the weakly grounded theory is that of Miller and Schofield (2003, 2008). While the former is less particularly dependent upon constitutional foundations than the later, and is therefore closer to the theories of mood and value cycles (along the continuum), it can also be characterized as being written in response to the later. So, I will discuss Miller and Schofield's theory first.

Miller and Schofield account for the cyclical realignment of partisan coalitions in their theory, postulating that this phenomenon is driven by two party political competition for activist support in a multi-dimensional policy space. In essence, they start with the fact that American political parties are broad based alliances that always combine contrasting elements. American party coalitions are therefore inherently unstable "alliance(s) of enemies" that compete electorally along economic as well as

social dimensions for popular support. Given this arrangement, each party will attempt to "outflank" the other by courting disaffected activists of the other side. Over time this brings about change in the coalitional foundations of the parties.

The authors of this theory attribute the origins of this dynamic to the first-past-the-post electoral rules and presidentialism that produce the two party system in the United States (Miller and Schofield 2003). They also suggest that Federalism can dampen the pace of partisan realignment by giving politicians local bases of coalitional support that may be out of synch with national trends (Schofield and Miller 2007). However, other than drawing these good but faint connections with constitutional and institutional foundations, their theory mainly relies on the actions of rationally motivated politicians to work (see also Schofield, Miller, and Martin 2003).

While Miller and Schofield's theory unmistakably provides insight describing HOW "coalitional realignment" works (see Petrocik 1981), it is sometimes unclear whether they believe they are explaining a cyclical phenomenon at all. In simultaneously (and mostly) attributing the slow speed of realignments to status quo protecting incentives of incumbents (from both parties) while suggesting that coalitional realignment is actually an ever ongoing (and presumably incremental) process, they seem to suggest that the regular thirty odd year periodicity normally associated with the alternation of new governing majorities is coincidental. By offering almost no predictive power along the WHEN dimension of analysis their theory explains less about the WHY element than the authors seem to realize.

Merrill, Grofman, and Brunell have argued that we don't need to rely on theories of competition in multi-dimensional space to explain the cyclical rise and fall of vote and seat share in American politics. They instead offer a "voter – party interaction model that depends on the tensions between parties' (sic) policy and office motivations and between voters" tendency to sustain incumbents while reacting against extreme politics" (2008: 1). Simply put, they argue that seat share rises and falls about every 14 years (just as, they note, the Schlesinger's mood cycle predicts) as a result of the majority's increasing pursuit of extremist policy preferences. These authors appear to be agnostic as to the role that constitutional configuration plays in the origins of their cycle.[8] Indeed, they believe that the "negative feedback loop" model that they construct, which simply relies on the rational interaction between voters and politicians to drive the cycle, could be extended to other democratic polities, including those with multiple parties (10).

The critique of their cycle must begin with its strict periodicity. The strong version of the theory advanced by the authors clearly predicts that, everything else being equal, partisan control of Congress will alternate every "12 to 15 years." These conclusions are so out of synch with the historical record (see again Figure 1.1) that one is inclined to wonder why reviewers didn't take more seriously the authors own admittance that "historical issues (are) … outside (our) specific expertise" (15). Indeed, if alternation of partisan control of Congress every dozen or so years is evidence of all things being equal in history, even the most impressionistic review of the record reveals that things are almost never equal. This suggests that these authors have underestimated the degree to which governing majorities can institutionalize their ability to control seat

share (and maintain their majorities). Furthermore, even if one rejects the authors own strong version of the theory and rather interprets the model in its best light, as a predictor of the "ebb and flow of partisan tides" underneath the level of partisan control of Congress, one is still left with a theory that predicts the same party's fortunes will rise about every 30 years. This too does not fit the historical record, and one is left (at this point) very uncertain as to what, this theory can be used for in its current form.

While these rational choice scholars bring new insights with them, their agnostic and weakly grounded theories can be, like value cycles, critiqued for doing damage to historical realities and lacking clear enough causal specifics to be predictive. Let's therefore move on to explore the two theories that are explicitly grounded in constitutional foundations.

Explicitly Grounded Theories

The category of cyclical theories that are more explicitly ground in constitutional foundations is dominated by two famous paradigms. The first is Stephen Skowronek's institutionally partisan, top down, presidential leadership focused, "political time" or "regime" theory (see also Crockett, 2002, 2007; Polsky and Cook 2005). The second is the holistic, bottom up, electoral behavior focused, "realignment synthesis" (Key 1955; Burnham 1970, 1991; Sundquist 1983). Although the former, political time theory, is less reliant than the later realignment paradigm in looking at constitutional roots systemically, and therefore is closer to the agnostic and weakly theorized category along

the continuum, it also follows the later in its date of articulation and therefore will be discussed second.

Burnham's realignment paradigm explicitly traces its origins back to a constitution that acts as an "almost perfect negative feedback machine" (1999). While the theory is not consistent in its focus on constitutional foundations, it does conclude that electoral behavior periodically, and abruptly, oscillates in response to a disequilibrium that develops between the dynamic American socio-economic system and its constitutionally structured – and static – political counterpart. Realignments are thus seen to "arise from emergent tension in society which, not adequately controlled by the organization or outputs of party politics as usual,[9] escalate to a flash point … (and eventuate) sharp reorganizations of the mass coalitional bases of the major parties" (1970: 10). I modify these conceptions, but will argue that a similar "capacity gap" opens as entropy increases.

These shifts are seen to work through V.O. Key's "critical election" tension management mechanism, which, as other scholars stress, changes the axis of partisan conflict and brings a new coalition to power (Schattschneider 1960; Petrocik 1981; Sundquist 1983). The critical election is then thought to lead to significant transformations in the general shape of policy outputs and institutional configuration (Clubb, Flanigan, and Zingale 1980; Aldrich and Niemi 1996).[10] All of this recurrently brings the underdeveloped political system back into equilibrium with the ever changing socioeconomic system.

This demonstrates that realignment theory, which even opponents admit has spawned an entire genre of literature,[11] contains a very systemic vision of cyclical change. However, critics have also made a number of charges against realignment theory and accused it of losing much of its predictive power. This happened primarily because it too has been criticized for doing damage to historical realities. Some have argued, because of continual Republican dominance, there was no "System of 1896" realignment (Skowronek 1993; Mayhew 2002). Others have made the case that the theory has been undermined by a fatal weakening of political parties, which left everyone "Waiting for Godot" during the missing realignment of the late 1960s early 1970s (Ladd 1991). Still others have made the case that there are better ways to organize the era before mass political parties took shape (Sibley 1991). While these critics have argued that realignment theory should be abandoned because it offers a flawed view of history and has spawned false predictions, I look at the source of the theory's problems from another angle and conclude differently.

I argue that much of the sometimes exceedingly narrow realignment debate has been framed incorrectly. I trace this problem back to the theory's lack of consistent focus on its own constitutionally traced causal dynamics. This allowed the focus of study to become somewhat misdirected and for critical elections to become so emphasized in the research as to be mistaken for the entire realignment phenomenon. Indeed, much of Mayhew's recent critique of the entire genre rests on just such a reductionist reading of the theory. I therefore speculate that, perhaps, if realignment theory had more consistently focused on the constitutional roots of the cycle, then debate would not have

focused too narrowly on electoral returns.[12] Indeed, perhaps more focus would have been given to the role that elites play in the dynamic, and the question everyone would have been asking is – are critical elections necessary for stasis to be overcome?

Skowronek's political time paradigm, which is the current reigning champion of cyclical theories, does not directly aim to reply to realignment theory's debates. However, in maintaining a periodization scheme very similar to Burnham's (1991), while shifting analysis to the presidential level, I argue he effectively uses an elite level focused research strategy to critique the critical election genre as well.[13] I therefore start by drawing parallels between the two theories and speculate that in Skowronek's line of scholarship "political regimes"[14] stand in for Burnham's "party systems," and rhetorical and conceptual focus shifts to concentrate on presidential "reconstruction" rather than on electoral "realignment." It then follows that reconstructive presidents replace critical elections as regime theory's reoccurring central mechanism of change.

Like realignment theory, regime theory also explicitly grounds itself in constitutional origins. However, Skowronek traces the origins of the regime cycle back to a constitution that gives each president motive to "shatter order" in exercising the powers of their office while simultaneously, and paradoxically, resting the legitimacy of these actions in their ability to reconcile these efforts with their charge to "affirm" order. From this (somehow) derives a third leadership task: to "create" order (1993: 19-21).[15] The problem of synchronizing these "impulses," as Skowronek calls them, is compounded by the fact that each president acts within a "political time" that they've unwittingly helped make, but which might not necessarily be of their choosing.

Presidents thus find that they themselves are the source of the context that limits what politics they are able to make.[16]

Skowronek argues that there are cycles in politics precisely because presidential leadership is usually constrained by one of two things. First, when a president is affiliated with the dominant political regime [majority coalition] he is constrained to affirm received partisan commitments. Second, even when a president is unaffiliated, he may be constrained by a resilient regime, which has the power to challenge attempts to break with the dominant party's commitments. Therefore, unless a president is both unaffiliated and fortunate enough to serve during a time when the dominant party is so weak it can no longer defend its partisan commitments, he cannot maximize the order shattering and order creating possibilities of the office and reconstruct a new political regime. However, when presidents do reconstruct, a new political era, led by a newly dominant party, is ordered and the regime cycle turns.

Skowronek does, additionally, warn that the reconstructive leadership that drives the regime cycle appears to be becoming progressively more difficult to practice. Indeed, he argues that because of the rise of the welfare state, a general institutional "thickening" is making the whole political time dynamic "wane." This, he argues, is why Ronald Reagan's reconstruction was markedly less successful than previous attempts (however see: Cook and Polsky 2005 and Skowronek 2005), and why he advises the abandonment of cycle based leadership stances that have outgrown their usefulness.

The political time paradigm has mostly been lauded and extended rather than critically analyzed.[17] Indeed, Skowronek has largely met his scholarly audience's

expectations by: 1) agreeing that there was not a "System of 1896;" 2) casting doubt on Reagan's reconstruction; and, 3) providing theoretical basis (and normative support) for the idea that cycles are waning in American politics. Perhaps as a result of this, the causal specifics of his theory have not really been deeply explored.

I have, however, argued that it has been a mistake not to take a critical look at Skowronek's theory (see Nichols and Myers forthcoming). Indeed, I conclude that a lack of conceptual clarity and causal specificity create unrealized problems for regime theory – which lead to problems with how he interprets the historical record. First, amongst the theory's shortcomings is the fact that we are not told how to conceptualize the descriptively ambiguous idea of regime "weakness," much less, to understand how it goes away. Second, we are not told what specific tasks are necessary for a president to successfully reconstruct – beyond reference to the nebulous requirement to shatter, affirm, and create order. These problems derive from the fact that even though Skowronek implicitly grounds his theory in constitutional structure, his cycle is conceived of mostly in "institutionally partisan" terms (Bessette and Tulis 2009), rather than being seen to occur within a larger political system of constitutionally separated powers.

As a result of this abstractness, Skowronek does not conceive of reconstruction in terms of being an elite level response to systemic conditions that do not readily disappear. Nor does he consider the possibility that leaders can fail to complete the tasks necessary to reconstruct. His regime theory thus lacks an appreciation for the possibility of reconstructive failure and it is therefore blind to the complications that can result from

failing to overcome problems that are rooted outside the presidential leadership paradox. Because of this, I argue that he has indeed done damage to the historical record. Specifically, he has misinterpreted the contentious events of the 1890s – when Grover Cleveland and Williams Jennings Bryan probably failed to successfully reconstruct. Likewise he has misread the 1980s by not considering how previous failures to reconstruct (in the 1960s and 1970s) may have contributed to Reagan's relative lack of success. Because of these missing links and historical misreadings, which do not place the reconstructive dynamic within a systemic view, Skowronek comes to the opinion that the waning of political time might be a positive development. In doing so, he reaches questionable normative conclusions that do not benefit from an understanding of the role that reconstructive leadership may play in maintaining the health of the polity.

Discussion

Through this brief review, a pattern has been identified in the scholarship on cycles in American politics. Namely, cyclical theories tend to have three interrelated problems. First, they often do not demonstrate much rigor in tracing the origins of their cycles back to firm roots. Partially because of this they, second, often lack clear causal dynamics. Finally, these underspecified theories are, then, perceived as both doing damage to the historical record and as being unable to explain crucial cases. Because of these problems, and the determinism often thought to be implied by cyclical dynamics, political science has come to view cyclical theories with a great deal of skepticism.

Another less recognized yet no less problematic trend within this literature is the tendency of its scholars to talk past one another. This is especially evident for scholars

with my pairings. The major mood and value cycle scholars, Schlesinger Jr. and Huntington, do not engage or refute each other. Neither do leading political time scholars debate with realignment theorists, admitting similarities or having fruitful discussions over differences. Meanwhile, because the rational choice based theorists don't share a dependent variable they debate little more than coming from different assumptions within the same broad approach.

Additionally, it appears that there is almost as little engagement across the pairs of scholars as there is between them. The rational choice scholars have done the best job touching bases with other cyclical theories though, with Schofield and Miller broadly working within (but not deeply engaging) the realignment paradigm and Merrill, Grofman, and Brunell framing their findings as evidence in support of Schlesinger's periodization schema and contra realignment's. However, this level of engagement is not enough to overcome the wider perception that the cyclical literature is in a state of disarray.

Despite these plentiful shortcomings, I now argue that all may not be lost for the development of new cyclical theory. First, as review has shown, there is much material to work with in moving forward. One of the least acknowledged problems of past cyclical accounts has been their unwillingness to engage and (perhaps) learn from each other. This suggests that part of an appropriate research strategy for moving forward includes taking advantage of what has come before. Not only may it be possible to take and weave strands together from many past cyclical theories, but different theories can be

used as alternative hypotheses in order to demonstrate the superiority of newly generated theory.

Second, by examining the source of past problems I have brought attention to the fact that a gap exists at the end of the continuum accounting for where cycles came from in the first place. One way to develop a new cyclical theory is then to become more rigorous about exploring how the U.S. Constitution may structure cycles. Indeed, much of the problem cyclical accounts have had with failed predictions, unaccounted crucial cases, and explanations that seem to do damage to the historical record can be traced back to their under theorized origins and poorly specified causal dynamics. In order to have the best odds of avoiding these problems, the review of the literature thus suggests that the appropriate starting point for further research begins with a clear exploration of the constitutional mainsprings of cycles.

With these avenues of advance in mind, I move forward, proposing to fill this gap by generating new theory that uses past scholarship where appropriate, and takes a systemic view of the foundations of the governing cyclical by paying particular awareness to the role constitutional structure plays in structuring the whole dynamic. In aiming to do this, my dissertation can, perhaps, be described as suggesting the outlines of a more self-consciously systemic historical institutional approach to the study of cycles. In the second part of this chapter I discuss what this means.

The Approach

The moniker I've just advanced suggests a holistically focused approach that is particularly attentive to the role that institutions (in my case the U.S. Constitution) play in structuring political dynamics and outcomes. In a nutshell, to be "systemic" means the proposed approach analyzes politics "in light of the multiple contending and at times conflicting principles of the polity as a whole" (Bessette and Tulis 2009). To be "more self-conscious" about this approach implies that I will not be rigorously outlining a fully articulated "systems thinking" way of applying this more holistic vision, but will be attentive to its tenants in theorizing. Calling the approach "historical institutional" means that it draws from and is part of the emerging neo-institutional literature that takes seriously "the role that institutions play in the determination of social and political outcomes" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 936). To provide greater insight into this proposed approach, let me start by briefly reviewing the established neo-institutional literature.

The Neo-Institutional Approaches

Three communities of scholars have been particularly influential within the neo-institutional movement (Hall and Taylor 1996). All have emerged in the past twenty-five years, mainly working separately, and in response to the behavioral perspective that dominated in the 1960s and 1970s. Individually, they are the rational choice, sociological, and historical instititionalists.

The first group, known as "rational choice institutionalists" (Riker 1982, Weingast 2002) take their theoretical orientation from the study of economics and

explore the ways in which institutional arrangements structure the behavior of political actors by establishing "the rules of the game" (North 1990). These rules lower transaction costs and help solve many of the collective action problems rational choice theorists are often interested in exploring.[18] Specifically, institutions help structure the expectations of instrumentally motivated, strategic acting, fixed preference maximizing actors whose calculations of how others are likely to behave affects their own behavior (Schotter 1981; Calvert 1995). Institutions, which are thought to be of a functional (and often formal) nature, do this by providing information and both agenda setting and enforcement mechanisms.

Another community, known as "sociological institutionalists," take their theoretical orientation from the study of organizations and explore the ways in which institutions – more broadly defined to include cultural elements – structure behavior by providing the "frames of meaning" that guide human action (March and Olsen 1984, 1989). This collapses the distinction between institutions and culture and challenges the idea that rationality or efficiency of function explain what institutions "do." Indeed, for this sociologically oriented group of scholars, institutions are generally associated with the transmission of cultural practices and are propagated more through diffusion than agreement. Institutions thus affect the behavior of "satisficing" actors by shaping the cognitive maps that help individuals interpret a situation and by affecting their identities, self-images, and preferences (Hattam 1993).

The third community, know as "historical institutionalists," draws inspiration from the other two 'neo-institutional' approaches (Steinmo, Thelen, and Longstreth

1992). These scholars tend to borrow eclectically from the strategic and cultural views of behavior and tend to define institutions broadly. For them, institutions can establish formal rules of the game or be cultural in essence, but more often than not are dispassionately seen to be "procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938). Sometimes included within this group are scholars of "American Political Development" (APD).[19]

Historical institutional scholarship is often distinguished by three features. The first is the particular attention that is often paid to the role power (and power asymmetries between groups) plays in politics. In such analysis institutions are important for the way that they distribute power unevenly. The second distinguishing feature is the unique focus often given to how historical factors, especially "increasing return dynamics" and path dependencies (North 1990; Pierson 2004), both impact institutional development and affect politics in unintended ways. In such analysis explaining how alternative outcomes can derive from similar start points is often stressed and particular attention is given to how "critical junctures" (Collier and Collier 1991; Mahoney 2001; Capocia and Kelemen 2007), long term "processes of change" (Pierson 2004), and context and configuration affect pathways of development.

The third distinguishing feature of historical institutionalism relates to how its leading advocates have often suggested that this line of research derives from and aims towards being systemic in its focus.[20] Hall and Taylor stress how historical institututionalists often "seek to locate institutions within in a causal chain that accommodates a role for other factors, notably socioeconomic development and the

diffusion of ideas" (942). Additionally, Pierson and Skocpol explicitly call for historical institutionalists to study big, substantive, questions by aiming at temporally sensitive analysis, which draws on awareness of "macro contexts" and the "combined effects of institutions and processes" (2002: 696).

It is this third feature of historical institutionalism that I draw upon and extend in my more self-consciously systemic approach to studying governing cycles. This is, however, not to say that it is within the scope or objectives of this dissertation to launch a full "systems thinking" approach to the study of politics as Easton earlier tried to do (see, 1953, 1965a, 1965b).[21] This dissertation should therefore be read as containing no more than some suggestive possibilities, which may add up to less than a rough sketch, of what may someday be included if General Systems Theory (GST) is someday extended to the field. Additionally, this attempt should not be mistaken as signaling an abandonment of scientific standards, analysis, or methods of verification in this dissertation. Fiduciary responsibility to the cumulative exercise that is social science requires me to, next, provide some additional exposition on what I mean by and hope to gain from being more self-consciously systemic. In doing this, it should become clear that my more self-consciously systemic approach to historical institutionalism is best conceived of as an attempt to gain a broader viewpoint in the theory generating phase of scientific research.

A More Self-Conscious Systemic Approach

As my Einstein quote at the beginning of the chapter suggests, we only see as far as the theory we select allows us to. Therefore, by signaling my intent to be more self-

consciously systemic in my theoretical approach, I start from the idea that my perspective will be broadened by drawing from the extensive General Systems Theory (GST) literature (Skyttner 2006). This is a body of interdisciplinary work, best suited for the biological and social realms, which stresses that sometimes the component parts of a system can best be understood when seen in the context of the whole (Capra 1996). This viewpoint takes serious the aphorism that it sometimes can be difficult to see the forest for the trees, and it stands in contrast to a rigid scientific reductionism, which only studies parts in isolation.

According to the theory's encyclopedic chronicler, Lars Skyttner, GST first arose in the 1950s when it became clear that "classical science, with its over-specialization and compartmentalization … proved its inability to handle problems of tremendously increased complexity" (2006: 37).[22] Specifically, systems thinkers argued that the scientific approach – attempting to reduce complexities to their constituent parts and then building an understanding of the whole through summation of lesser understandings – was no longer best for the study of systems in which variables are so interlinked to each other that cause and effect become circular. Under these conditions, one variable can be both cause and effect and it is a mistake not to understand that wholes are more than the sum of their parts (see footnote #23 for Table 2.1 comparing the analytic and systemic approaches).[23]

Deriving out of early successes in military operations research and from Ludwig von Bertalanffy's founding article (1955), systems theory was premised on the idea that systems had general characteristics independent of the scientific areas to which they

belonged. This encouraged early researchers to integrate knowledge through use of analogy and isomorphic comparison in order to meet three goals:

1) to formulate theories of systems dynamics, goal-oriented behavior, historical development, hierarchic structure, and control processes;

2) to work out a methodological way of describing the functions and behavior of systems, and;

3) to elaborate generalized models of systems (Skyttner 2006: 40-41).

According to advocates, it is therefore a mistake to view the systems enterprise as an attempt to replace traditional science. Rather it is better to see it as an attempt to create a general "systems way of thinking" to complement it.[24]

One of the myriad of loose methods and applications derived from this early thinking was the development of a so-called "systems approach" within modern organizational studies and management science.[25] Key to this approach is a methodology that "attempts to combine theory, empiricism, and pragmatics," and a perspective that "looks at a system from the top down rather than from the bottom up" (Skyttner: 42). Both seem good principles to retain for my own more self-consciously systemic approach.

Other principles, or "properties," (as Skyttner refers to them) of what later became known as the General Systems Theory (GST) were articulated by von Bertalanffy (1955) and Litterer (1969). A partial and summarized list of the properties GST is based upon includes the following precepts (53-54):

- The objects and attributes of a system are interrelated and interdependent.

- Systems are hierarchal or generally complex wholes made up of nested smaller subsystems all of which may contain specialized units performing specialized functions.
- Systemic interaction seeks some goal, final state, or some equilibrium.
- The interrelated objects constituting the system must be regulated in some fashion so that its goals can be realized.
- Open systems (all biological and most social) have equally valid alternative ways of attaining the same objectives from different initial conditions. They are also capable of obtaining different objectives from the same initial given state.
- All systems, if they are to obtain their goals must transform inputs into outputs. In biological and social systems these transformations are mainly of a cyclical nature.
- In a closed system, the inputs are determined once and for all; in an open system, additional inputs are admitted from its environment – ie: the next higher system.
- When left alone, all systems tend towards disorder and maximum entropy. Entropy is a measure of the amount of disorder or randomness present in any system. An open system can, for a finite time, avert this unalterable process by importing energy from its environment.

I will draw upon these precepts in my own more self-consciously systemic approach, but before I can do so, some further expositional work is now needed to more precisely

define a few of the key concepts. This leads me from general understandings to particular appropriate awareness' for the study of political systems.

Further Definitional Understandings

In order to proceed from the central proposition of systems study, which holds that there are generally applicable properties of systems, social scientific methodology requires me to better define what a system is. Unfortunately, this appears to be a bit more difficult than one might expect. There appears to be no shortage of possible definitions to choose from; a fact which prompted critic Paul Weiss to derisively comment that "a system is anything unitary enough to deserve a name" (quoted in Skyttner: 57). Since this obviously provides little of the conceptual clarity I aim for, and is not much of a starting point, I will proceed by listing a number of definitions that I've culled from the literature and discuss them in sequence to come to an understanding usable in my own research.

An often used definition of a system is: "a set of interacting units or elements that form an integrated whole intended to perform some function" (Skyttner: 57). The key awareness this suggests is that all systems have a function or purpose to which they are both directed and that can serve as the starting point for measuring their success. This reveals that GST is as deeply committed to creating a purposeful or teleological systemic vision as some leading American Political Development scholars are against it. Indeed, Orren and Skworonek have cheerfully counted the ways many reductionist APD researchers have successfully rooted out, abandoned, shorn, discarded, and purged

"teleology" and "external standards of progress" from their literature; and they certainly continue to call for the subfield not to let up from its pogrom against assumptions of "teleology, organic growth, linearity, (and) progress" that guided thinking about political development in the past (2004: 67, 77, 78, 120, 174).

With this major conflict revealed but unresolved, I now turn to another definition, which sheds some light on the general nature of the purpose to which systems are directed. This is Derek Hitchins' (1992) pragmatic yet more scientific definition, which reads: "a system is a collection of interrelated entities such that both the collection and interrelationships together reduce local entropy." This suggests that the purpose of any open system, which by definition can import energy into it from the environment, is to draw this energy in and locally (and temporarily) overcome the Second Law of Thermodynamics. (The Second Law, of course, simply states that all energy in the universe degrades irreversibly ie: tends towards higher entropy.) This entropy reducing purpose of all biological and most social systems is made explicit in Maturana and Varela's 1974 definition of a complex, organized, and open system, which they define by their "capacity for autopoiesis or self-renewal." Human designed systems can be autopoietic, if they contain human regulators within their whole and have a capacity for self-renewal – as does a political system, or they can be "heteropoietic" (or machine like in my own terms) if they contain no capacity for self-renewal but still have a purpose – like a computer.

Through a brief review of definitions, I have thus outlined a general understanding of what a system is. This understanding finds that systems are purposive.

It concludes that this purpose is always directed towards self-renewal and entropy reduction at the local level.

Application of other GST principles suggests a couple of additional things. First, through the interdependence principle, it is possible that the reduction of entropy at one level or element of a system can reduce entropy of the whole system – although it remains true that the overall entropy of the universe still increases. Second, applying the differentiation principle, it is possible that some sub-systems and units nested within a system are able to perform specialized functions contributing to the reduction of entropy of the whole system. An example of the interdependence and specialization principles working simultaneously in a biological system is the specialized role the urinary system plays in reducing entropy for the whole human body by filtering blood and removing the waste of the entire individual. Fulfillment of this purpose in turn ensures that the other systems of the body are able to provide the oxygen, nutrients, and molecular level waste removal that are necessary for the urinary system to renew itself.

Some hard-core systems thinkers are probably perfectly willing to suggest that social systems are both designed and operate with the same close structural-functional relationship that exists in my biological example above. I, however, conclude (in harmony with much of political science research, including that of the APDers and historical institutionalists) that – in effect – social systems are far less likely to be functionally well designed. Additionally, they are almost always less self contained, and often more likely to witness mutations than most biological systems. Because of this, I conclude that a "more self-conscious" systemic perspective has different expectations of

what will be seen in the social world. Unlike pure system thinkers, I expect to see the terrain of some social systems littered with appendix like organs / units that still exist to renew themselves, and exist interdependently within systems, but do not perform much of a specialized function, if any, for the whole.

Within systems theory parlance, these sort of units would be judged as having low "efficacy," which can be defined as a measure of the extent to which a system contributes to the purpose of a higher system (Skyttner: 77).[26] Systems rife with low *efficacy* units would, presumably, be less *efficient* in meeting their purposes with minimal effort, and might even become less *effective* in meeting their overall goals. This would depend in part, as effectiveness always does, on whether a system is able to evolve and keep its input capacity ahead of or in line with its output demands. However, in general one concludes that the proliferation of low efficacy relationships contributes to greater entropy of the whole. One can also surmise that increasing systemic entropy also contributes, following the Third Law of Thermodynamics, [27] to an increase in low efficacy relationships within it. This circular pattern of causality has important consequences in the political system. Indeed, it helps to explain where the governing cycle comes from.

The Endogenous Origins of Political Cycles

In short, the governing cycle comes from the need to reorder and renew a high entropy political system burdened by the accumulation of inefficacious relationships within it. It is the political system's endogenous propensity to both generate and

propagate low efficacy sub-systems that helps to increase its own entropy. Rising entropy can in turn spark accelerated loss of efficacy, creating a positive feedback loop which can push a political system into crisis. As I've alluded to, and shall discuss in the next chapter, constitutional structure greatly impacts how this natural dynamic plays out, structuring the rules and incentives that shape political conflict and helping to determine what it takes to overcome high entropy conditions. In the case of the United States, constitutional structure sequentially leads to the political system needing reenergizing. This, in turn, requires shifting the main axis of conflict, assembling a new majority coalition that brings in new sources of energy and allows for some institutional reordering of inefficacious relationships within the governing regime.

To understand the particular origins of the governing cycle, it is thus imperative to first understand, generally and theoretically, how entropy increases in any political system. As I've suggested, entropy grows in political systems through the accumulation of inefficacious sub-systems. Because political systems have diffuse regulation mechanisms and relatively uncompetitive survival environments, they are especially fertile incubators and poor eliminators of low efficacy sub-systems and units. Therefore, political systems regularly witness the growth of sub-systems and units that either drift towards low efficacy status or lose their efficacy under changed conditions.

Before continuing on with how this accumulation contributes to cyclical dynamics, let me further explore the two ways that efficacy loss may initially occur, and then further discuss accumulation itself. I start by tracing the origins of inefficacious *drift* and *hardening of position* back to lack of regulator control. First, efficacy loss can

occur the system sub-system relationship as sub-systems drift away from a supportive position. *Drift* may thus be likened to a cancer like spread of inefficaciousness that higher level regulators are unable control. Perhaps, Orren and Skowronek's concept of "intercurrence," or the abrading caused by multiple incongruent orders operating simultaneously, describes some of what this kind of drift looks like (Orren and Skowronek, 1994; 2004). More simply, however, an example of drift occurs when a political coalition becomes beholden to extreme elements within it and begins to look illegitimate to the majority of the polity.

Second, and conversely, efficacy loss may occur when conditions change but relationships between the sub-systems / units remain the same. In this case, loss of efficacy may be likened to a sclerosis like *hardening of position* that is due to higher level regulators inability to control relationships and keep them at their most efficacious position. This hardening of position is certainly the kind of thing that Burnham had in mind when he wrote of "stasis" and the growing "incapacity of 'politics as usual' to integrate, much less aggregate, emergent demand" (1970: 10).

While political systems' diffuse and weak regulatory control over its sub-systems and units may promote their inefficacious cancer like drift and sclerosis like hardening of position, it is their relatively uncompetitive environment that allows these units to prosper and accumulate. I use the term relative because unlike economic systems, which may only be a bit better at correcting for drift and hardening,[28] political systems lack market mechanisms that consistently bring the "invisible hand" to bear on the inefficacious sub-systems they do not value. This competitive market environment tends to regulate how

far a sub-system can drift or harden into an inefficacious relationship with the higher system before they are brought in line or terminated. This conclusion is in line with GST thought, which links the nature of any system's outputs to its inputs. Specifically, it is noted that systems that allow continuous or "real time" inputs (like markets) will also exhibit continuous / real time outputs or corrections. Conversely, systems that tend to allow only more discrete inputs, like political systems with their periodic elections, will also exhibit discrete correctional outputs.

Markets have multitudes of independent investors are continuously able to evaluate and almost instantaneously sanction any sub-system whose inefficaciousness has undermined its value. Political systems, with their infrequently changing majorities and long slow legislating processes, which favor logrolling and outright oppositional behavior, are better at reaching compromise than providing regulatory sanctions. Indeed, because legislative politics just cannot stay on top of the political systems' sub-systems and units, the judicial and executive branches have almost everywhere been empowered to provide more continuous regulation. However, even with this, the political realm does not become market-like in its quickness to adjust. Indeed, the political sphere is notoriously "sticky" and it is hard to overcome well positioned defenders of inefficacious sub-systems to terminate or bring them in line (Skowronek 1982; Orren and Skowronek 1994).

Due to their very nature, political systems can thus be said to contribute to their own increasing entropy by poorly policing inefficacious relationships within themselves. I therefore conclude that in political systems the root causes of increasing entropy are

mainly endogenous and are not primarily derived exogenously – that is to say from its environment. This remains especially true as increasing entropy follows the Third Law of Thermodynamics and further undermines the ability of regulators to regulate, which sparks accelerated growth of inefficaciousness. Indeed, at some point of increasing entropy, political systems must be expected to enter into a positive feedback loop of inefficacy, with inefficacy feeding entropy and entropy feeding inefficacy. This combination causes a spike in both attributes. In my governing cycle theory I shall refer to this occurrence as crossing the historically contingent high entropy threshold, which ignites a firestorm of discontent and brings the political system into crisis.

Many in political science have analogous conceptions. Skowronek calls the cognate of this crisis condition "disjunctive" politics in his work. He describes this as a time when past commitments are called into question as failed or irrelevant and nothing seems to work for the affiliated president of a now weakened political regime (1993: 39). As I noted earlier, in his formulation disjunctive politics seems to appear without cause; however, I add that Polsky's unpublished extension insightfully suggests that "partisan regimes" are eventually undone by their own successes and by political entrepreneurs that offer new menus of solutions during political crises (2002). Meanwhile, in realignment theory, Burnham refers to politics reaching a "boiling point" (1970: 27). He describes this as a period of rapid destabilization, set off by contingent crisis in the environment, and characterized by increasing intensity and rigidity, all of which eventuate a "flip-over" marked by a change in mass electoral behavior (1991: 109-112; 115-116).

Qualitatively, all of these terms may be thought to describe similar conditions of political upheaval, uncertainty, and discontent. However, Polsky and Burnham's causal dynamics rely on exogenous shocks / crises as their causal drivers, whereas I use system theory to argue that entropy, which has endogenous origins, is the actual driver that then allows for crises to be causally relevant. This explains why only some exogenous shocks / crisis have the effect of sparking disjunctive politics or bringing about a political boiling point and others do not. Indeed, this suggests that it isn't the size or magnitude of a crisis but rather its timing – coming after the onset of high entropy conditions – that matters. Somewhat cynically one might go so far as to venture that if the time is right, any crisis may do. In fact, while it is not the focus of this dissertation, it should not surprise us if we were to investigate and find that ambitious opposition politicians often play an important role in shaping and, if necessary, manufacturing crises to feed the entropy feedback loop. In doing so, they consciously undermine the effectiveness of the political system in an attempt to catapult themselves into power as its saviors.[29]

I will go even further than this and argue that system theory suggests that the onset of high entropy conditions constitutes a type of political crisis in itself. This is to say that once rising entropy surpasses the threshold to kick off a feedback loop, the political system enters – and importantly *will remain in* – a chronic state of crisis requiring reordering and renewal. This explains how a political system can maintain a crisis like atmosphere long after an acute crisis, like an economic downturn, oil shock, or electoral controversy, has ended. It also suggests that if political leaders fail in their

initial attempts to renew a high entropy political system, the condition does not go away and will continue to require addressing.

Since the true source of political crisis lie within the system itself, the solution lies in renewing this system through reordering it and lowering its entropy. This reordering task entails finding new sources of energy to draw into the political system, while presumably also requiring that the efficacy of some sub-systems be restored. It may also require the building of new specialized sub-systems and units, to perform new functions. All of this depends, contextually, on what the nature of contemporary challenges to the political system are and, structurally, how political conflict has been shaped by the constitution and helps to determine what it takes to renew the political system.

I now turn to this matter of structure. In the next chapter I examine how the United States Constitution uniquely, and sometimes unintentionally, influences how these dynamics play out in American politics. In doing so, I trace how the dynamics of new governing majority formation undergird the governing cycle.[30]

[1] Albert Einstein as quoted in Heisenberg, Werner. 1971. *Physics and Beyond*. 62-63.

[2] This 'first causes' classification schema is merely suggestive of a new way at dividing the cyclical literature. The schema is not comprehensive (I don't consider any cyclical theories of economic determinism… like Political Business Cycle models). The theories that I do discuss are, however, the most widely known and representations of their kind. For a more complete list of cyclical theories based on classification by the substantive focus of the theory, see Resnick and Thomas (1990). Part of the reason that cyclical theories may often talk past one another is they tend NOT to focus their analysis on why there are cycles in the first place.

[3] Other famous mood or value cycles include works by Namenwirth (1973), McClelland (1975), and Carmines and Stimson (1989).

[4] See Depoe (1994) and McDaniel (1999). The quote is McDaniel's summary of the view of Schlesinger's critics. A view which McDaniel seems to share.

[5] The full quote is: "Democratic values are deeply rooted in American life – more deeply, it would appear, than capitalist. At least when democracy and capitalism have diverged, democratic values have proved more potent. National swings back towards uncontrolled private interest are generally holding actions; swings in the democratic direction tend to produce enduring change. The spiral effect registers the continuing accretion of democratic reform." (1986: 47). Walter Dean Burnham famously disagrees with this, arguing that when democracy and capitalism battled for supremacy in the 1890s… capitalism won (1991).

[6] See Schlesinger (1946). Numerous authors have been critical of Jackson's casting as democratic paragon, with his actions in and support of Indian removal widely cited as example of his illiberalness. See Rogin (1975), Satz (1975), Cave (2003).

[7] Quote from Nichols (1983) is a summary of Beers' position.

[8] Unlike mood cycles, which are arguably independent of the institution of voting (ie: they can occur under monarchial rule… like in colonial America), Merrill, Grofman, and Brunell's negative feedback loop cycle explicitly relies on a political system that includes voters. Other than this 'democratic' requirement, they appear to believe their theory is agnostic to constitutional configuration. One party democracies like PRI dominated Mexico and cold war Japan may challenge their agnosticism.

[9] See also John Aldrich's account of party system change (1995), which comes to very similar conclusions. Here Aldrich argues that historical change is driven by a "mismatch of (party) form and (historical) problem" that on occasion has allowed ambitious politicians to periodically achieve new institutional solutions (1995: 286). This argument replaces the electoral realignment driven vision of party system development with a party elite driven 'punctuated equilibrium' model (277-296). In moving analysis away from the electorate to an elite level, our views are consistent. However, there are two main differences. First, Aldrich's vision does not appear to differ from the realignment perspective in relying upon exogenous historical problems to drive change. I offer a more endogenous answer. Second, Aldrich's account does not tell us how the persistence of institutional forms explains the regularity or timing of punctuated change (279). I link institutional micro-foundations to a cyclical dynamic.

[10] Clubb, Flanigan, and Zingale (1980) and Aldrich and Neimi (1996) took initial steps to measure the institutional and policy changes resultant of realignments. This promising line of research seemed to just be getting off the ground as realignment theory started being abandoned.

[11] The full title of Mayhew's critique is: Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre (2002). See also Harold Bass's summary and bibliography of the literature for an idea of its breadth (1991), and Rosenof (2003).

[12] I'm indebted to Jeff Tulis for our discussions on the failure of realignment theory to remain focused at the regime level.

[13] Burnham and Skowronek agree that 1800, 1828, 1860, and 1932 are major cyclical cut points. Skowronek does not count the "System of 1896" as a distinct political regime but concludes (with many caveats) that a Reagan regime started in 1980.

[14] As Polsky has argued, a more conceptually accurate modifier for Skowronek's party system like, era long lasting, regimes is "partisan" (see especially 2002). Although the partisan modifier is to be preferred, the definition of the term regime is still problematic. Regime theory conflates the majority coalition with the institutional governing regime they create and manage. The two are connected but separate constructs.

[15] It is unclear where a president's order creating 'impulse' derives from. Close reading of Skowronek reveals that only the order shattering and order affirming impulses derive from constitutional structure.

[16] If presidents are not the ultimate source of the political context that restrains them, then the title of Skowronek's book gets the relationship backwards and it should be changed to … *The Presidents Politics Make*. This is why he thinks presidents can adapt to the waning of political time with no regard to the damage this may do to the polity. In regime theory, the context that presidents act within is created by their own agency rather than to a systemic condition that periodically needs addressing.

[17] Critiques of the political time paradigm have been made by Milkis (1995); Hoekstra (1999); and Riley (2000). Mostly, however, Skowronek has inspired extensions of his theory within presidential studies (see Harris 1997; Crockett 2002, 2007) and expansion of this theory within both developmental study (Plotke 1996; Polsky 1997, 2002; Orren and Skowronek 1998) and Public Law (Graber 1998; Clayton and May 1999; Whittington 2001, 2007).

[18] Such an approach has been applied to the study of the Congressional Committee system (McCubbins and Sullivan 1987; Weingast and Marshall 1988), political parties (Cox and McCubbins 1987), coalitional behavior Laver and Shepsle 1990), constitutional construction (North and Weingast 1989), democratic transitions (Przeworski 1991), and institutional reform in the EU (Tsebelis 1994).

[19] Orren and Skowronek (2004) organize APD by emphasis on "ordering mechanisms" (Bensel 2000; Carpenter 2001), "pathways of change" (Skowronek 1982; Skocpol 1992), and "multiple orders" (Tulis 1986; Orren 1991). Leading comparative scholars, like Pierson and Skocpol tend to lump APD within the historical institutionalist approach (2002), while leading APD advocates, like Orren and Skowronek, tend to argue APD is its own subfield… within which some scholars use a neo-institutional approach (2002, 2004).

[20] Hall and Taylor (1996) note the importance earlier systemic focused "structural-functionalists" had on the development of historical institutionalist thought. They cite Almond and Powell (1956) for their especially influential work.

[21] The closest recent attempt I've found appears to be some conference paper level work on the development of a methodologically sophisticated way to model and test a systemic approach to research in the IR domain. For example see: Hwang, Wonjae. "A Systemic Approach To Democratic Peace: Multilevel Analysis of International Politics" *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the The Midwest Political Science Association,* Apr 15, 2004. Dr. Hwang declined to share this paper with me.

[22] This paragraph and much of this section of the chapter follows upon Skyttner's excellent review of the GST literature.

Here is the rest of Skyttner's quote in its original form. "The interaction of system-variables are so interlinked to each other that cause and effect is a kind of circular logic. One separate variable thus can be both cause and effect. An attempt to reduce complexities to their constituents and build an understanding of the wholeness through knowledge of its parts is no longer valid. Not understanding that the wholes are more than the sum of their parts, scientists had assembled knowledge into islands, extending into an archipelago of disconnected data."

[23] The following is from: http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/ANALSYST.html (principia cybernetica web)

"This table, while useful in its simplicity, is nevertheless a caricature of reality. The presentation is excessively dualist; it confines thought to an alternative from which it seems difficult to escape. Numerous other points of comparison deserve to be mentioned. Yet without being exhaustive the table has the advantage of effectively opposing the two complementary approaches, one of which-the analytic approach-has been favored disproportionately in our educational system."

Table 2.1
Analytic vs Systemic Approaches

Analytic Approach	*Systemic Approach*
isolates, then concentrates on the elements	unifies and concentrates on the interaction between elements
studies the nature of interaction	studies the effects of interactions
emphasizes the precision of details	emphasizes global perception
modifies one variable at a time	modifies groups of variables simultaneously
remains independent of duration of time; the phenomena considered are reversible.	integrates duration of time and irreversibility
validates facts by means of experimental proof within the body of a theory	validates facts through comparison of the behavior of the model with reality
uses precise and detailed models that are less useful in actual operation (example: econometric models)	uses models that are insufficiently rigorous to be used as bases of knowledge but are useful in decision and action (example: models of the Club of Rome)
has an efficient approach when interactions are linear and weak	has an efficient approach when interactions are nonlinear and strong
leads to discipline-oriented (juxtadisciplinary) education	leads to multidisciplinary education
leads to action programmed in detail	leads to action through objectives
possesses knowledge of details poorly defined goals	possesses knowledge of goals, fuzzy details

[24] For the record, I have my doubts as to how well GST plays handmaiden to and compliments traditional science as is it used by some of its practitioners. Indeed, "systems thinking" seems to be vulnerable to

sloppy deductive reasoning if not tethered closely with scientific verification of its hypotheses. However, when used mainly in theory generation and in conjunction with a mixed methods research design, as it is in this dissertation, I think insights provided by GST can be quite powerful.

[25] In addition to the systems approach, Skyttner briefly discusses a veritable cornucopia of examples of the application of system thinking, to include: system analysis, engineering, dynamics; general cybernetics, management cybernetics, and bionics (42-48). The systems approach was judged only applicable to my research interests.

[26] The other two measures of system performance are effectiveness and efficency.

[27] The third law of thermodynamics states that all processes slow down as they operate closer to maximum entropy. This means, as we've all experienced, that it becomes progressively harder to be effective or efficient in a messy environment.

[28] A free market economic system may be somewhat better than a democratic political system at preventing drift and hardening in the first place because it is composed of independent companies and actors whose profit seeking motivations and exposure to market expectations habituate them to the need to regulate efficacy in the first place. However, as there are cycles in business as well as politics, neither system is prone to accumulation of entropy increasing inefficacious relationships.

[29] The ploy is as old as the hills. In American political history I suggest this happened as far back as when the Jeffersonians cast the Alien and Sedition Act as a crisis event (to ignite an anti-Federalist feedback loop), and as recently as when Democrats cast the 2000 election, War in Iraq, and hurricane Katrina as crises (to ignite an anti-Bush feedback loop – which worked in destroying the GOP brand name and winning Barak Obama the Democratic nomination). Unlike the onset of the Great Depression or the banking meltdown of 2008 (which were real exogenous shock / crisis), the other 21st century crises were mostly shaped endogenously, and purposely, to repudiate the Republican majority. Evidence of this lies in the fact that once they served their purpose, they quickly became ignored non-crises. I'm willing to venture that the crises that brought down the Bush presidency and secured Obama's nomination will probably go down in history as amongst the most artfully manufactured of all time.

[30] To do so requires taking the holistic approach that self-conscious systemic studies aim towards. This requires examination of the ways in which constitutional configuration and institutional form interact to influence the behavior of political actors and citizens alike. It takes seeking to elucidate how behaviors, like political conflict, are both structured and biased by a complex constitutional order that interacts with a dynamic universe in often unintended ways.

Chapter 3: Theory and Model

"The two most important requirements for major success are: first, being in the right place at the right time, and second, doing something about it" ~ Ray Kroc

In this third chapter of my dissertation, I move from literature review and abstract theory to construction of a general model of the governing cycle. I argue that America's unique constitutional design structures political competition in ways that lock-in a stable status quo and increase systemic entropy. Rising entropy eventually brings about conditions that encourage the reordering of the system through formation of a new governing majority. This suggests, at the macro level, that political stability and change are uniquely related.

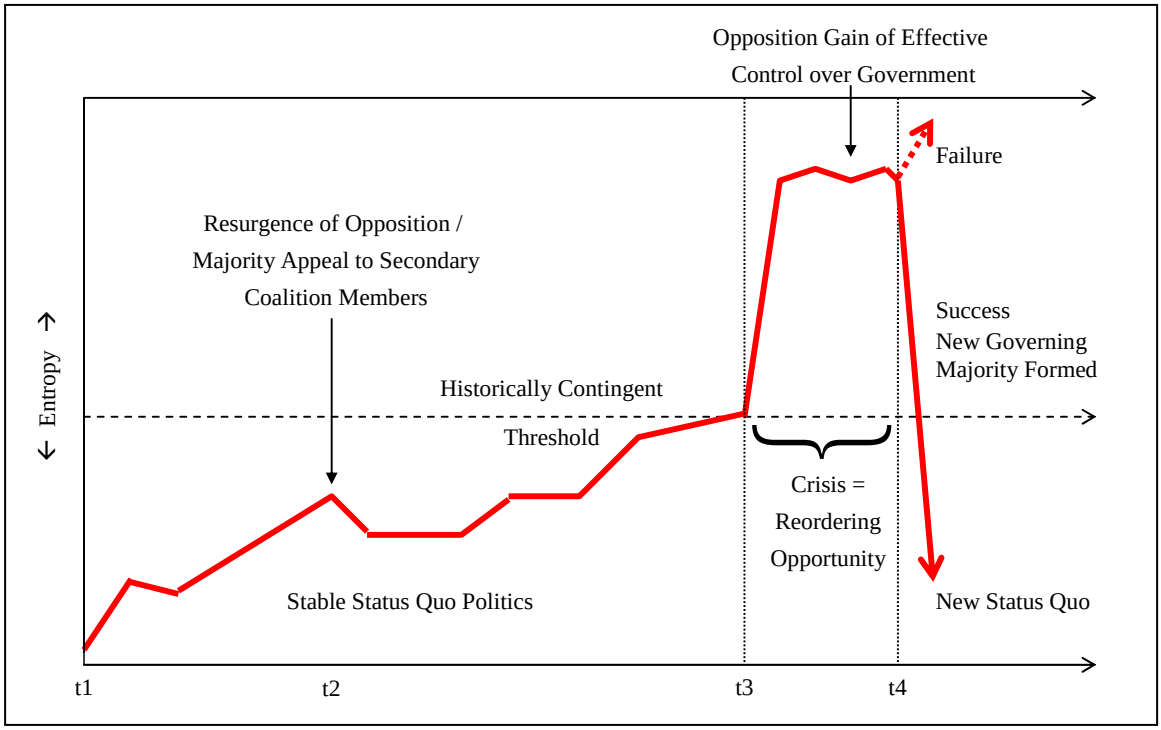
One way to expand this narrative is to graphically depict it through a figure that depicts what the hypothesized rise of entropy looks like over time in the American political system (see Figure 3.1). This figure suggests that at a beginning time (t1) when a new governing majority is formed, systemic entropy is low. After this time, entropy increases, as the well constructed governing system structures stable, "path dependent," status quo maintaining politics (Arthur 1989, North 1990, Pierson 2004). At some future time (t2), perhaps 10-14 years later, the opposition usually becomes resurgent and rides contingent downturns in the economy and fatigue with the majority back into control of governing institutions. As a result of this clear and present threat to their dominance, the majority turns to secondary factional members within their coalition for the energy needed to ensure they don't lose control over development. As they do so, coalitional

relationships within the governing majority tend to drift revealing legitimacy gaps while institutional relationships harden and reveal capacity gaps, thus causing entropy to rise. The governing majority thus begins to lose its ability to both keep institutional arrangements functioning effectively and to maintain coalitional cohesion.

As a result of these inefficacious relationships increasing entropy spurs by the resurgence of a newly responsible opposition (t3). Their repudiation causes entropy to enter into a feedback loop that acts as a "structural cause" in producing political crisis. This then moves the "pressure on the status quo to a much higher level" (Pierson 2004 93). This entropy spike also tells us that a "critical juncture" has been reached in the developmental sequence. Under these conditions, political dynamics change and new possibilities play out as "space for human agency opens" (Katznelson 2003, 282). I refer to this moment as the opening of the "reordering opportunity," and conceive of the sequence of events that follow (t3-t4) from it as a "reactive sequence" or temporally linked and causally tight chain of events that is nearly uninterruptible (Arthur 1989).

Within the reordering opportunity, political leaders are then spurred to address entropy through the formation of a new governing majority. If, at a later time (t4), leaders complete the three tasks necessary to succeed in this enterprise in a straightforward manner, a new governing majority is formed, systemic entropy drops dramatically, a new status quo is established, and the cycle begins anew. However, if at this time they fail, entropy will certainly continue to increase, development will proceed upon more complex and protracted pathways, and unexpected outcomes may occur.

Figure 3.1.
Estimated Plot of Rising Entropy, the Opening of the Reordering Opportunity, and New Governing Majority Formation



Further extension and support of this general narrative is given in this chapter. I first focus on how the U.S. Constitution structures stable, status quo maintaining, politics – by combining separation of powers with a two party system. This uniquely shapes the nature of American political competition by encouraging "irresponsible" party behavior from the opposition associated with changing the direction of government, who face nearly insurmountable odds in gaining control of the government, (APSA report 1950).[1] Second, I look at how this stability leads to rising entropy – particularly that associated with the majority's degraded ability to keep institutional and coalitional relationships in their most efficacious positions. This brings about high entropy conditions that act as a

catalyst to the reemergence of "responsible" opposition behavior and the opening of the reordering opportunity.

Next, I center my attention upon events within the reordering critical juncture, spotlighting how the accomplishment of three specific tasks allows a new governing majority to be formed. These tasks are:

1) shift the main axis of partisan conflict;
2) assemble a new majority coalition (that allows for effective control of federal governing institutions to be won and maintained), and;
3) institutionalize a new governing regime.

After this, I discuss how failure to accomplish these tasks increases entropy and prolongs the reordering opportunity. This section's discussion culminates with the presentation of a flow chart that both schematically models the dynamics of new governing majority formation and sets expectations for developmental analysis – of both typical cases of straightforward success and crucial cases that witness failure. These expectations are then tested in chapters four through six against the historical record using a multi-method research design that uses both case study and regression analysis.

Structure

It is my contention that there are cycles in American political development because of how the U.S. Constitution structures political competition. More precisely, new governing majorities are repeatedly (and sequentially) formed because the separation of powers scheme and two party system structure the nature of political competition,

locking in long stretches of status quo maintaining politics. The irresponsible party behavior of an early, lead protecting, majority and an equally irresponsible and overwhelmed opposition, whose inability to overcome constitutionally embedded obstacles to change the direction of government, enable such stability. The obstacles that every opposition find so difficult to overcome revolve around needing to shift the scope of political conflict in order to form a majority governing coalition and gain effective control over all three, veto holding legislative institutions, so that it can institutionalize their priorities and advantage. This is how political stability is created and how the governing system is unintentionally set upon a pathway towards rising systemic entropy.

To further this discussion, I start by noting that many neo-institutional scholars have focused on how institutions act as mechanisms to "lock-in" outcomes and produce times of continuity (North 1990; Arthur 1989; Pierson 2004). These accounts have been framed in terms of how "increasing return dynamics" occur after institutions are adopted and positive feedback loops, reinforcing initial outcomes, are generated (Arthur 1994). Processes that follow these dynamics are characterized by their sensitivity to: initial conditions, contingent events, and patterns of timing and sequence. They therefore can lead to a wide range of outcomes. These dynamics are, however, best known because they produce "path dependent" results that make it almost impossible to reverse a particular developmental course once it is determined – even in the face of potentially superior alternatives (Liebowitz and Margolis 1995). This is why significant, path altering, developments are usually thought to occur via critical moments or "junctures"

(Collier and Collier 1991) that make "punctuated change" (Eldridge and Gould 1972) most possible.

I argue that the U.S. Constitution structures just such path dependent processes within political development through the ways in which its' separation of powers design and two party system interact. First, I discuss how separation of powers intentionally sets the rules of the macro level legislative game, and second, I discuss how separation of powers unintentionally creates a two party system that interacts with these rules to structure political competition.

Rules of the Macro Political Game

Most obviously, intentionally, and necessarily simplified for a systemic focused discussion, separation of powers divides federal legislative authority between three different institutions: the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Presidency. In doing so, it gives each effective (if not absolute in the case of the presidency) veto powers over the process. This sets the rules of the macro level legislative game, requiring the concurrence of the House, Senate, and (usually) President to enact new law.[2] This creates a well recognized macro level barrier to the passage of any legislation, even before all the other micro level factors that further diffuse power within the Congress are considered.[3]

The constitutionally structured rules of macro level game also, if somewhat less appreciated, impact the nature of American political competition by creating significant advantages for the group that is able to gain effective control over the three veto holding

institutions. Initial institutional controllers can take active measures to become path-setters who are able to propagate their priorities and advantage via increasing returns dynamics (Pierson 2004). They do so, first, by using their effective control over government to create or reorder institutions and debut solutions to policy questions that further their coalitional priorities and preferences. This initiates increasing return dynamics that favor continuance of whatever pathway is initially taken.[4] The QWERTY keyboard, a technology that, once introduced in the 1870s, became nearly impossible to move away from is a typical example of this phenomena. (David 1985). Second, initial institutional controllers are often able to institutionalize the initial power asymmetries that favor them. Tom Ginsburg's comparative study of judicial review demonstrates how this phenomena works in the realm of constitutional framing, by showing that constitutional design is "largely a function of politics and interests" intended to give "insurance" to self-interested politicians making the initial deal (2003: i).

Third, initial institutional controlling path-setters are further able to advance their priorities and advantage through negative or preventative actions using the complexity, opacity, and collective action problems inherent in politics to ensure that new preferences do not replace theirs. Indeed, the separation of powers system is wonderfully designed to create stability by favoring status quo defenders, making it difficult to radically alter initial pathways. It is well recognized that separation of powers favors status quo defenders at the micro level by creating complexity that favors tactical obstructionism and delay while obscuring individual responsibility for outcomes.

From a macro level perspective constitutional design also favors the defense by allowing preservation of the status quo as long as initial path-setters are able to maintain control over a single veto holding institution. This allows initial controllers to weather relative downturns in their collective electoral fortunes and to keep steering the polity on the same general path of development by merely preventing a change in course.

Constitutional design thus creates a macro level game whose rules lead initial controllers of all three veto holding legislative institutions to establish a status quo by institutionalizing their priorities and advantage. This sets off increasing return dynamics that lock-in the general direction that development will take. These rules then lead initial institutional controllers to protect their status quo by taking appropriate defensive measures, which (at the macro level) focus on maintaining control of at least one veto holding institution.

How constitutional separation of powers structures the rules of the macro level game suggests several things about the motivation of players and the nature of American political competition. First, since significant and long term benefit accrue to those that are first to gain effective control all three legislative veto holding institutions, there will be sufficient motivation for ambitious and far sighted political leaders to ignore free rider problems and overcome collective action difficulties associated with accomplishing this goal. This strongly implies that the formation of an institution controlling "governing majority" provides the greatest challenge and reward within America politics.[5] This leads to the conclusion that *the collapse of one governing majority and the rise of another should be a major event in American political development* – one that provides the

opportunity to reorder institutions and alter path-ways of development, events that are central to this dissertation.

My second conclusion is that benefits of initial institutionalization of preferences and advantage continue to accrue via path dependent processes, and since the second stage of the game favors defensive play, the governing majority will soon be motivated to act less "responsibly." Specifically, they will direct most of their energy towards the preservation of the status quo rather than risking their majority by working to fulfill a clear platform, which suggest multiple things. One, times of stalemate and actual or de facto "divided government"[6] are not interregnum periods (Mayhew 1991). Even if they appear like "there is no single ordering of authority relations … no political synthesis" (Orren and Skowronek 1999: 701), it is not necessarily true that no one is in charge.[7] Instead, these periods should be seen, and conceived of, as times when initial path-setters protect pathways of development and further their first order priorities mainly through defensive rather than offensive maneuvers.

Within the long status quo protecting periods of politics, the main course of development proceeds upon pathways that are established and bounded by initial preferences and outcomes. Therein, most change within status quo protecting periods is incremental. As initial path-setters play the macro level legislative game defensively to protect their early lead (and electoral fortunes), they mostly rely on positive feedback loops, "institutional conversions" (Thelen 2003), and "entrepreneurial" action within established equilibriums to advance their program (Sheingate 2003). During these eras there will, of course, be room for change, driven by reaction to historical contingencies,

exogenous shocks, and (especially in second order issue areas) political maneuvering. Eras where defensive play predominates are known for their continuity and stability above all else.

A third way in which separation of powers structures the rules of the macro level game is by allowing benefits to continue to accrue as long as pathways of development are protected, giving the governing majority motivation to keep effective control over all three veto holding institutions. Since gaining veto points is the only way in which the opposition can institutionalize their own priorities and advantage, the governing majority will go to great lengths to both maintain and if necessary, quickly recapture lost veto holding institutions. The occurrence (or threat) of this type of loss will provoke energetic efforts – like Newt Gingrich's launch of the institution capturing Contract with America plan – to regain control of at least one veto holding institution for the governing majority. Otherwise, their era of dominance can end.

Complicating the Game – the winning strategy

Now that I have discussed how separation of powers shapes the general contours of political competition – by structuring the rules of the macro level game – let me shift gears and explore how it creates a two party system that further impacts competition by complicating how the game is played and won. Most obviously and simply, America's unique separation of powers design leads unintentionally to a two party system that produces broad, internally heterogeneous, mass type, political parties separated by a single main axis of partisan conflict (or line of cleavage). In doing so, it complicates the

game of controlling the three veto holding institutions by tying it to the antecedent requirement of assembling a national, majority, coalition united on the winning side of the axis of partisan conflict—or creating what I call a "governing majority."[8]

It is the governing majority's advantage and preferences that get institutionalized, path dependently advanced, and protected by the macro level game. Lasting control over institutional veto points therefore hinges on the maintenance of a coalition tied to a particular, institutionalized, axis of conflict. Political competition, as Schattschneider concluded, thus revolves around attempts to resist and displace the scope of conflict. This struggle determines the main axis of partisan conflict, cleaving partisans into majority and minority / opposition coalitions (1960).[9]

Before I discuss displacement of conflict in further detail and draw out implications, let me first explore how America's unique separation of powers design structures its' two party system. Simply put, the Constitution's apportionment scheme for the House of Representatives, staggering of Senatorial elections, and presidentialism all favor dualistic organization of partisan interests. The House's apportionment scheme suggests geographical representation (by district), which resulted in the adoption of simple majority first past the post electoral rules (SMFPTP). Duverger (1954) argues that these rules lead to a two party system, due to wasted vote syndrome. Furthermore, the Senate's tripartite, staggered, electoral "class" structure ensures that only one of each states' Senators can be elected at any time,[10] thereby making proportional electoral rules impossible to use for this office (Constitution of the United States).

Additionally, as John Aldrich (1995) demonstrates, legislative bodies will naturally form into majority and minority voting blocks (primarily in response to social choice problems). A political system also containing a strong – veto holding – presidential office further encourages the specific formation of broad coalitions affiliated with and against the administration at the party-in-government level. Since presidential candidates must put together a national level majority coalition to win their office, there is strategic incentive to extend pro and anti-administration legislative voting coalitions into dualistic national electoral coalitions.

Finally, there are a number of other factors that reinforce America's separations of powers' inherent partisan dualism. The American electorate has generally and historically been thought to be broadly democratic and liberal in nature (Tocqueville 2000; Hartz 1955). This has generally undercut the rise of regional, ethnic, class, or religious based parties. Second, because of this, the American electorate's preferences are often (simplistically) thought to fit a normal distribution curve (Downs 1957), thereby reinforcing the centripetal tendencies of the electorate by encouraging politicians to court the moderate median voter (Fiorina 2006, but see Miller and Schofield 2003, 2008). Therefore, socio-cultural disposition and political practice have historically had little impact on the constitutionally structured predisposition towards a two party system. It remains an interesting question as to whether a pre-existing dualistic tending culture reinforced the separation of powers system, or if this system took binary shape to a young and yet unsettled culture. Nonetheless, one may conclude that by structuring dualistic

political competition, separation of powers has (so far) reinforced the centrist pre-tendencies of the electorate.

Because separation of powers leads to a two party system, which fits in well with American socio-cultural proclivities, dualistic political competition between absolute majority seeking parties can be thought to divide representatives and electorate along a single, cleaving, line. Schattschneider conceives of this line in terms of the "scope of conflict" it defines (1960), effectively tying the axis of partisan cleavage to the political priorities and governing philosophies that divide contenders into dueling (and dualistic) "party coalitions" (Petrocik 1981). This line, or axis of cleavage, then broadly delineates who is in which governing coalition by separating those who are in agreement with the majority's political priorities from those who are not. Those on the majority side of this line will be favored in the macro level game. They will therefore (most likely) obtain effective control the three veto holding institutions, institutionalize, and set off path dependent processes that lock-in the preferences and political advantages that unite them.

This perspective suggests three things about how the constitutionally structured two party system complicates the nature of American political competition. First, since the formation of a governing majority is inexorably linked to scope of conflict, political leaders will seek to accomplish three tasks: establish the main axis of partisan conflict, assemble a majority coalition around it, and institutionalize a partisan regime that establishes a status-quo which locks-in its' priorities and advantage favoring status quo. By inference, this suggests that new governing majority formation is primarily an elite led phenomenon.[11] Because its' accomplishments revolve around the control and use of

the party leading, nationally elected, presidential office, governing majority forming leadership is prominently presidential in foci.

Furthermore, the completion of these tasks is necessary for a new governing majority to rise and replace a collapsing one. Since completion of these tasks gives opportunity to reorder politics and set new pathways of development, the dynamics of new governing majority formation are central to this dissertation. Since this focus on dynamics defines new governing majority formation in terms of the nature of the phenomenon rather than in terms relating to the magnitude of consequences resulting from it, there are (unlike, arguably Skowronek's and Burnham's theories) no existential questions raised when the consequences of new governing majority formation vary in scope and scale.

Second, since the defense of the status quo is inexorably tied to the maintenance of the scope of conflict, majorities will resist being displaced by the opposition, ensuring that development follows the general, preference and electoral advantage advancing, direction projected by original pathways. These efforts begin soon after initial control is established. The still coalescing, new governing majority must survive the ensuing repeated electoral attempts to displace their proposed new axis of conflict in order to fully institutionalize their preferences. The historical record suggests that new governing majorities must win three consecutive presidential elections to accomplish this.[12]

The first presidential electoral victory is "critical," in terms that Burnham, Skowronek would recognize, establishing the effective control necessary for a "responsible" new program to be attempted. The second presidential electoral victory is

"critical" in the sense Ackerman focuses on in viewing the elections of 1868 and 1936 as being paramount (1991). That is, serving as a referendum on the new majority coalition and their direction altering governance. The third presidential election is "critical" because it makes clear that the new axis of conflict has truly divided the nation. It also underscores the vigor of the new majority coalition by overcoming the natural fatigue associated with one party in control of the presidency for eight years, and by passing the torch of leadership to "favorite son" candidates.[13] Overall, this suggests that, as a new governing majority is formed, partisan tides will rise for a period roughly the length Schlesinger (1986), Merrill, Grofman, and Brunell (2008) predict their cycles will take.

As a result of this string of presidential victories, the opposition will soon be less motivated to act "responsibly." Because they were unable to resist the establishment of a line of conflict that put them in the minority and allowed the governing majority to institutionalize their preferences and advantage, some opposition leaders will find it to their advantage to blur their own distinctiveness. They will become, as David A. Crockett demonstrates with opposition presidents, "third way" candidates, triangulating within parameters established by the new majority, using inevitable fatigue and contingent events to boost their own fortunes (2002, 2008).

The immediate goal of irresponsible opposition leadership is to stay in office and to put the minority into a position where they can temper the pathways institutional development takes. So long as they can effectively divide government, and use the rules of the micro level game to get some of what they want, the minority will find their own rather lucrative niche in the status quo. This turns many in the opposition into status quo

defenders as well – even though this is ultimately counterproductive in the macro sense, as the opposition always needs to shift the axis of cleavage to form their own governing majority.

Third, and finally, the two party system complicates defense of the status quo by combining diverse, often conflicting, elements within mass based coalitions. This creates a majority coalition that, while broadly united around the main axis of partisan conflict, has leading and secondary factional elements with attendant primary and secondary coalitional priorities (Schattschneider 1960). This coalitional heterogeneity creates problems after the new governing majority rather quickly accomplishes its primary and coalition uniting goals (Polsky 2002). Indeed, maintaining coalitional cohesion then becomes an increasingly difficult task for coalition managers, who must cope with pressure to use the governing regime to promote secondary priorities, which are both fully opposed by the minority and not universally shared by the whole majority coalition.

The inherent diversity within the majority coalition generates possibilities for the opposition to appeal to disenchanted majority factional members. They appeal to these factions to form a new governing majority with them along new lines of shared priorities. This is especially true, as Miller and Schofield have suggested, when political competition occurs in a multi-dimensional space – like it is thought to in the United States (2003, 2008). Indeed, as these authors suggest, America's two party system conceals fault lines that nearly "guarantee long-run instability" by giving incentive to the minority to "outflank" pivotal groups along one dimension of conflict or another (2008: 433). In this way, the Republicans were able to appeal to white southerners along the

socially conservative values dimension of conflict and eventually undermine the economic policy dimension united New Deal coalition (Petrocik 1981; Carmines and Stimson 1989).

What I've just explained can be summarized like this: if the constitutionally shaped rules of the macro level game revolve around gaining effective control of veto holding institutions, and the grand strategy of political competition focuses on the displacement of conflict and formation of new governing majorities, then success is achieved through operational level maneuvers at the coalitional level. This is a concise summary of how separation of powers and the two party system structure political competition in the United States. It also suggests that political development follows a governing cycle that begins with the initial path-setting formation of a governing majority, followed by an era of "irresponsible" status quo defending politics. Then, at some point this era will end and a "responsible" opposition will rise up and try to form a new governing majority. The next section therefore explores what causes the shift from irresponsible to responsible opposition behavior. I discus what the nature and sources of entropy are, how status quo politics produces conditions of high entropy, and how these conditions impact political development.

Entropy

As was laid out in the last chapter, entropy is a measure of a system's inability to do work. Furthermore, all systems naturally tend towards a point of maximum entropy when they can do no work unless they are reordered. While I do not profess to provide a

full accounting of entropy in this dissertation, let me briefly explore the concept some more.[14]

Entropy is a condition that arises and grows within mature political systems. As was earlier established, it is thought that when entropy reaches a historically contingent level of intensity, it encourages responsible opposition behavior which then functions like a structural cause in a long term process of change – "mov(ing) the pressure on the status quo to a new, much higher level – very close to the threshold level for major political change" (Pierson 2004, 93). Once this condition is met, a critical juncture emerges in which the processes and dynamics of new governing majority formation can begin. Entropy is therefore systemic in origins, even as responses to it remain presidentially centered.[15]

Entropy arises when the efficacy of institutional and coalitional arrangements within the political regime decline. When this happens, the coalition underpinning the regime begins to fracture and a national debate about the adequacy of the regime's institutionalized preferences ensues. Attempting to maintain their dominance, regime managers respond to these developments in ways that are generally counterproductive. For example, efforts to revitalize the regime by shifting its focus to controversial secondary coalitional priorities tends to make the regime appear beholden to extremists and exacerbate tensions within the governing majority. The effect of such effort is almost always to further weaken the governing majority by calling its legitimacy further into question. Further, as time goes on, a gap between institutional capacity and need opens and the majority can't respond to this problem without undermining its coalition.

Ultimately then, entropy is caused by endogenous political processes that decrease the efficaciousness of institutional and coalition arrangements and lead to a dysfunctional environment with the passage of time.

Because of the distinctiveness of individual historical eras, the "tipping point" of entropy – which opens the opportunity to build a new governing majority – will be crossed in differing ways and at contingent levels. Therefore, periods of increasing entropy never look exactly the same. However, high entropy conditions, as I have conceived it implies a set of indicators that tend to appear in sequence or together. These include: 1) the completion of the substantive program around which a governing majority is first organized; 2) the decreased cohesion of the majority coalition; 3) the rise of new cleaving issues, conflicts, and problems; 4) the advent of a crisis atmosphere that calls into question the legitimacy of the governing majorities' governing philosophy and their competence; and 5) the increased salience of corruption scandals.[16] These developments embolden the opposition, causing them to formulate an alternative vision and act more responsibly in both repudiating the majority coalition and electorally "outflanking" them on the issues (Miller and Schofield 2003, 2008).

Within a reordering opportunity, shifting the main axis of partisan conflict is paramount for opposition leaders. Axes of conflict split the electorate along lines of cleavage and separate contending groups into rival partisan camps that are themselves united around shared priorities, worldview, and issue / policy area preferences (Schattschneider, 1960; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Shifting the main axis of partisan conflict is central to successful new governing majority building because the political

reordering that this entails can only be accomplished through the cultivation of a new long-term majority coalition. Axis of conflict shifting is therefore a precursor to, and part of, the assembly of disparate social groups into a broad, new, partisan coalition. Once a new majority coalition gains power, it then attempts to institutionalize its new priorities and approaches to policy questions, both to overcome entropy as well as to secure its own electoral advantage. If it is successful, then a new governing majority is built and systemic entropy should fall dramatically.

As I also suggest in the last chapter, entropy can further, more particularly, be conceived of and described in terms of the efficaciousness of relationships within a system. Highly efficacious relationships predominate in a low entropy system capable of work, while low efficacious relationships are emblematic of a high entropy system. Efficacy, in turn, decreases due to either the hardening of a relationship, which keeps it in an increasingly poor position as conditions change over time, or the drift of a relationship, which allows it to slip into an even poorer position. Reordering, then, must return relationships to more efficacious positions in order to decrease entropy and reenergize the system.

The relationships that are most important to the governing majority are tied to its essence. They derive from the tasks necessary to form a new governing majority and relate to: whether the majority is able to maintain control over veto holding governing institutions, where the axis of conflict cleaves across the electorate, how groups are assembled into coalitions, and whether the institutional capacity of the governing majority meets needs. The more efficacious and supportive institutional and coalitonal

relationships are for the governing majority, the more work they can perform, and the less efficacious the less work they can perform. Increasing entropy will result from loss of efficacy along these four broad dimensions.

Along the first dimension, it has already been established that the most efficacious relationship a governing majority has with veto holding governing institutions is effective control over the House, Senate, and presidency (even though control of all three does not ensure that there won't be de facto divided government in some issue areas due to the micro level rules of the legislative game). Effective control must be gained for the institutionalization of the priorities and advantage of a new majority. I purposely use the modifier "effective" here to suggest that control is relative to the ends pursued. Usually, effective control is simply a majority in both Houses, but due to the factional nature of parties, temporary cross party alliances can give effective control as well. Indeed, I will argue that Ronald Reagan and the Republicans gained this sort of effective control over the House of Representatives in the 1981 Budget battle, allowing them to institutionalize a new, albeit-hybrid, era of conservative governing priorities and advantage (see also Nichols 2004).

After institutionalization of new priorities and advantage locks in a new status quo, the majority no longer needs to maintain this highest level of efficaciousness in order to defend their preferred pathways of development. It is quite possible for government to quickly become effectively divided and the new governing regime to remain dominant. Therefore, while periods of actual (or de facto) divided government

are less efficacious, they are not necessarily damagingly so long as one veto holding institution remains in the governing majority's hands.

Loss of control over all three institutions is very inefficacious to the governing majority, constituting a crisis of potential governing majority ending proportions if it is not reversed within a short time. Indeed, if the governing majority cannot find the energy to recapture governing institutions and return them to a more efficacious relationship, the opposition will gain the chance to institutionalize their own preferences. This is exactly what happened after the opposition gained effective control of all three veto holding institutions after the elections of 1800; 1828; 1860; 1932; and 1980.[17] Thus, save but one time in history, no governing majority has lost effective control of all three veto holding institutions for more than two years and survived. The exception to this role occurred during the First World War when the Democrats wrested control of all three institutions from the System of 1896 Republican majority coalition in the election of 1912 and remained in unified government control until the 1918 election when the GOP won back both houses of Congress (see Figure 1.1 and Table 3.2). The other four times the governing majority lost control of all three institutions, (1841-1843; 1893-1895; 1953-1955; 1993-1995) they quickly regained control.

Along the second dimension, determining where the axis of partisan conflict cleaves across the electorate, a governing majority needs the axis of conflict to cleave the electorate in a way that places their priorities on the more popular side. Since this is key to how control over veto holding governing institutions is maintained, it is inefficacious for a governing majority to allow the axis to shift.[18] Majority threatening

inefficaciousness occurs along this dimension when the battle to define what politics is about is lost via inability to control what the main axis of conflict is. Such may said to have happened when the New Deal's dominant emphasis on government intervention was replaced by Reaganism's view that "government isn't the solution, it is the problem." This suggests that the goal of every governing majority is to freeze the "axis of conflict" relationship in its initial position.

Along the third dimension, how groups are assembled into coalitions, the most efficacious relationship a governing majority can have with a coalition for it to be internally united and in the majority. As was discussed earlier, the state of remaining internally united is difficult to maintain, as every majority coalition in a diverse, two party, polity is made up of contrasting and competing factions. Keeping the majority in the coalition is closely tied to the axis of conflict, for as long as it doesn't shift the same coalition is favored to stay the majority. In the long run, both coalitions are affected by changing demographics and inter and intra coalitional political maneuvering. This suggests that there is considerable room for efficacy decreasing drift within these relationships, especially as secondary majority factional members maneuver to use the governing regime to further their priorities and opposition leaders appeal to factional elements in outflanking maneuvers. Thus, loss of coalitional cohesion signals increasing entropy. Despite this, majority managers may, at times, find themselves turning a blind eye towards, and possibly even encouraging, drift in order to gain energy from secondary coalition members in order to maintain control over veto holding institutions. Majority threatening inefficaciousness occurs along this dimension, when factions from the

majority become susceptible to the out-flanking maneuvers of the opposition and bolt the party.

Along the fourth dimension, whether the institutional capacity of the governing majority meets needs, relationships must be evaluated in regards to two different referents: first vis-à-vis institutions and the governing majority, and second, vis-à-vis institutions and the polity. The most efficacious relationship a governing majority can have with the institutions that make up the governing regime appears, from a partisan perspective, to be for them to fit together harmoniously and to be synchronized in efficient pursuit of desired priorities and advantage. Yet, as has been established, because institutional persistence leads to the simultaneous operation of multiple clashing "orders" – a condition Orren and Skowronek refer to as "intercurrence" (1994, 2004) – institutions are never wholly in the most efficacious position for any governing majority.[19] Therefore, while the initial name of the game along this dimension is reordering institutions to increase their efficaciousness, success is always relative and never complete. Even the moderate and targeted reordering that occurs in the institutionalization of a new governing regime must be sufficiently efficacious for initial path-setters the process produces path dependencies that provide long term electoral benefits.

Over time, as either control of governing institutions are lost, or de facto divided government asserts itself, majority leaders will increasingly lose their inability to manage institutional development. This results in either incremental drift or hardening in an increasingly inefficacious position. Both signal rising entropy. An example of the kind

of institutional drift that undermines political advantage is the 2002 passage of the Bi-Partisan Campaign Regulation Act (BCRA), which undercut the Reagan Republican governing majority's historic advantage in fundraising. A recent example of hardening is the GOP's commitment to deregulation, which contributed to the economic crash that sealed their electoral fate in 2008. Majority threatening inefficaciousness, however, most likely occurs along the second attribute of the institutionalization dimension.

Drift away from or hardening of the governing majority's priorities and advantage is not the most threatening source of entropy along the fourth, institutional, dimension. This is because evaluation must also be made in terms of the most efficacious relationship a polity can have with the institutions that make up the governing regime. It appears from this civic perspective, that the most efficacious relationship is for institutions to fit together harmoniously and to be synchronized efficiently to solve the problems society delegates to government. Institutional efficacy suffers because of the simultaneous operation of clashing institutional orders. However, efficacy may also be hurt by institutionalization that fails to keep pace with changing needs (a la Burnham's theory of systemic disequilibrium). Ultimately though, institutionalization that drifts away from the best interest of society (rather than the best interest of the governing majority or their affiliated special interests) is what may lead to collapse of the governing majority. Thus, I hypothesize that while institutional hardening can increases entropy vis-à-vis the polity, it is drift that fatally undermines public support for the governing majority.

This highlights an inherent tension within institutional relations of democratic polities between governing as an exercise in gaining and maintaining authority, and governing as an exercise in using this authority to fulfill ends. Thus far almost everything from the rules of the macro level game, to the scope of conflict displacing strategy to win this game, to the coalition outflanking maneuvers needed to execute this strategy have focused on governing as an exercise in gaining and maintaining authority. Even in the realm of institutionalization of a new governing regime, most of the focus has been on using authority in a way that furthers the priorities and advantage of the majority. (Happily, the majority's interests have tended to coincide nicely with the interests of the American polity). It is indicative of the centrality of this focus on authority that Orren and Skowronek define development exclusively in terms of "shifts in governing authority" (2004: 123).

From the civic perspective of institutionalization, viewed in terms of the pursuit of the needs of the whole people, governing must be understood in the context of using authority for the good of the polity; not just an empowered majority or their affiliates. This follows, one could argue, from classic republican theory as well as liberal democratic cultural expectations, both of which conclude that the majority merely represents the best approximation of the will of the whole while possessing the least ability to tyrannize it. Thus, deeply imbedded within and intertwined around the rules, strategy, and maneuvers associated with the governing enterprise is *a normative proviso* that stipulates that the entire authority gaining and maintaining game be played for the benefit of the polity. It is because of this that the efficaciousness of institutional

arrangements can be different for the governing majority and the polity. Indeed, because an irresponsible majority will be increasingly concerned with maintaining its authority, it must be expected that gaps will develop between the two referents. Institutionally, what may be good for the governing majority, may then not always be as good for the collective gander. In a democratic polity, when a responsible opposition can show the people that the majority is out for itself, no longer acting on behalf of the people, the opportunity opens for the minority to form of a new governing majority.[20]

The idea that a normative proviso exists within the governing cycle suggests that collective cognitive dissonance plays an important role in the final stages of the dynamic. Thus, not too unlike Huntington, I argue that a gap can come to exist between the American people and their ideals about the legitimate exercise of power (1981: 61). My account differs from his in that I trace the roots of this gap to constitutionally structured political dynamics that rely on conditions of increasing entropy and a responsible opposition to (essentially) convince the public that this normative gap exists. Thus, while political conditions and elite agency drive the critical juncture open, it is the collective awareness of a "legitimacy" gap that sends entropy skyrocketing and opens the reordering opportunity, suggesting two things.

First, unlike Huntington's account, it suggests that the opening of a normative gap accompanies every new governing majority formation. Thus, I argue that public anger over what was perceived as the illegitimate exercise of power played a role in opening the reordering opportunity of the 1790s, 1850s and, 1930s, just as it did in the Jacksonian, Progressive, and 1960 protest eras that Huntington documents. The difference is that in

the pre-Civil War and Great Depression eras the gap between institutional capacity and changing conditions (Burnham's gap) was so great that it became the focus of reform efforts. In the weakly institutionalized eighteenth century American polity, the slight opening of the normative gap (fueled in great part by the Alien and Sedition Acts) was enough to give impetus to topple the Federalist majority.[21] This, second, suggests that the perception of an illegitimacy gap is necessary and, perhaps, sufficient for the reordering opportunity to open, while the perception of a "capacity" gap only impacts the possibilities and nature of reform initiatives within the critical juncture.

To summarize my conclusions how entropy can be conceived of in terms of the efficaciousness of relationships, I present Table 3.1. Row one lists the four dimensions of measure, rows 2-5 list the relationship between different dimensions and the governing majority, and row 6 corresponds to the relationship between institutionalization and the polity. The second column describes the most efficacious relationship, and the third and fourth columns describe less efficacious and majority threatening inefficacious conditions.

One prominent theoretical conclusion arises from this summary. W hile my governing majority theory shares affinity with the realignment paradigm in finding the origins of political cycles in constitutionally rooted institutional disequilibrium, it leads to different conclusions about which relationship is the most important to the cycle. Following from the discussion of the normative gap, there is disagreement between governing cycle theory and the realignment paradigm on the role played by the majority's

Table 3.1
Entropy in Terms of the Efficaciousness of Relationships

*Area of Relationship w/ Governing Majority**	*Most Efficacious Relationship*	*Less Efficacious Relationship*	*Majority Threatening Inefficaciousness*
Veto Holding Institutions	effective control of all three	actual or de facto divided government	loss of control over all three
Main Axis of Partisan Conflict	cleaving electorate / priorities in majority	Shifting	redefinition of what politics is about
Coalition	united	loss of cohesion	factions susceptible to 'out-flanking'
Institutions I (as related to the majority)	synchronized in pursuit of priorities and advantage	loss of centralized control over development	Drift or hardening undermining priorities and advantage
Institutions II (as related to the polity)*	synchronized in pursuit of societal needs of governance	hardening in the face of changing conditions; "capacity gap"	drift to extreme, illegitimate, position; "legitimacy gap"

inability to keep institutional arrangements in their most efficacious position (vis-à-vis the needs of polity) . For Burnham the capacity gap that opens between the stasis prone political system and the dynamic socio-economic system is paramount in causing the party system to collapse. However, as the institutions II row within Table 3.1 suggests, this capacity gap is merely inefficacious (column 3, row 6). Governing majority collapse is actually more driven by the legitimacy gap that forms when institutions drift to extreme positions (column 4, row 6).

Indeed, Burham's reliance upon a capacity gap suggests that some sort of exogenous shock emanating from the market sector is always necessary to spur the electoral realignment sequence. My interpretation, however, suggests that it is endogenous political processes and elite actions that bring entropy to the tipping point and therefore ultimately drive the cycle. This difference accounts for why Burnham has formulated his theory in terms of electoral "earthquakes" and punctuated change, while my theory is conceptualized in terms of critical junctures that open space for political leaders to spark the tight chains of causation that, depending on the way that they are resolved, may or may not bring about punctuated change.

I thus argue that my account explains why economic downturns often fail to bring about the occurrence of governing majority changing cyclical dynamics. Indeed, it isn't the downturn (or other exogenous shock) that drives the political system into crisis, it is the degree of entropy and political climate that exists when the shock occurs that determines if the event can become part of a political crisis. Thus, if an exogenous shock occurs in an already high entropy political system, it may be latched onto by an opportunistic opposition to further legitimate "responsible" repudiation of the status quo. If the same shock were to occur under lower entropy conditions, which don't allow it to be tied to the actions of an already illegitimate governing majority it may only encourage the opposition to act "irresponsibly" by positioning themselves as better managers of the status quo. In such a case, when entropy is not above the threshold to spur a responsible opposition, even if the opposition sweeps the majority from power, the reordering opportunity does not open, and the dynamics of new governing majority formation do not

play out. Such is the story of the Bill Clinton led Democratic takeover of government in 1992. They took advantage of an economic downturn to gain control of all governing institutions, but then quickly discovered that the governing majority's status quo was not open to reordering.

Now that the general nature and particular sources of entropy have been explored, I will further examine how status quo politics produces the conditions of high entropy that inspire the opposition to shift from irresponsible to responsible behavior. The governing majority's authority maintaining focus on preventing shifts of the axis of conflict, while preserving control over veto holding institutions, causes them to take inappropriate coalitional and institutional steps that eventually decrease efficacy across all dimensions, bringing entropy to its "tipping point."

In short, appealing to secondary coalitional members, usually for the energy to take back governing institutions, sets the stage for majority ending repudiation by a responsible opposition. The immediate consequences of the pursuit of secondary coalition priorities (favored by some factions but not all) are salutary to the majority, resulting in the recapture or maintenance of effective control over the veto holding institutions that protect their preferences and advantage. However, these actions eventually undermine the majority by making them seem beholden to extreme elements that are illegitimately exercising power, opening space for the responsible opposition to implement counter mobilization and out-flanking efforts.

As majorities struggle to maintain control over veto holding governing institutions, their dominance is often undermined when they are forced to resort to "non-

persuasive" stratagems to advance their coalition's secondary priorities. These stratagems emphasize and include (but are not limited to) changing long established rules of the micro legislative game, and using inherent executive and judicial powers to get around legislative roadblocks. These stratagems are distinguished from early reordering phase institutionalization processes not by their means (reordering often also resorts to non-persuasive stratagems to achieve primary coalitional ends), but by their timing and the secondary ends pursued. They are likewise often successful in the very short term, however, they are easily characterized as illegitimate actions taken by extreme elements bent on reordering institutional arrangements into dangerously inefficacious positions for the polity. As such, the use of non-persuasive stratagems pushes entropy close to its' tipping point and helps to galvanize the minority into taking up responsible opposition behavior.

Responsible opposition behavior thus aims to ignite a firestorm of civic discontent in the name of reordering politics. It styles itself as aiming to return control of government to more moderate and representative partisans. The majority's shift to pursuit of secondary coalition priorities is thus necessary for the opposition to repudiate the majority for being more than just wrong or incompetent but actually – illegitimate. In making this case, a responsible opposition will additionally use any contemporarily occurring exogenous crises to repudiate the majority's outdated definition of what politics is about, holding them accountable for gaps that almost invariably always exist between institutional capacity and pressing social needs. Repudiation should thus be seen as an attempt to use delegitimization to both outflank the majority on the issues and

shift the axis of conflict. When the spark of repudiation catches fire, the tipping-point has been reached, the critical juncture opens and entropy quickly spikes to higher levels, engulfing the governing majority in the flames of a first degree political crisis.

Thus, the actions that the majority takes to maintain their authority in the face of opposition resurgence turn out to be inappropriate and "wrong" from the perspective of the long-term sustainability of their dominance because they decrease the efficacy of relationships, increase entropy, and inspire the return of responsible opposition behavior. The quest to maintain authority IS therefore the ultimate endogenous, political, cause of the conditions that increase entropy up to and past their tipping point, cause crisis, and open the reordering opportunity. These conditions then position the opposition to act as agents of necessary change, and they facilitate the successful outflanking maneuvers that can shift the axis of partisan conflict to favor a new governing philosophy and, usually, a new governing majority.

Let me take a moment to explore the events within this sequence in a bit more detail. First, it should be noted that every governing majority in Skowronek and Burnham's pantheons, save the Jeffersonian, has had to contend with a resurgent opposition twelve to fourteen years after first winning effective control over all three veto holding institutions (see shaded cells, Table 3.2).[22] As is demonstrated, in five out of seven governing majorities, the opposition was able to gain control over all three institutions for themselves.[23] What prevented the loss of all three institutions in the Jeffersonian and Lincoln governing majorities was, first the Federalist party collapsed,

and second the Republicans made their "corrupt bargain" to give Rutherford B. Hayes the White House over the majority vote winning Democrat, Samuel Tilden.[24]

Table 3.2
Institutional Control and the Resurgent Opposition

Governing Majority	*Effective Control of All Veto Holding Institutions*	*Resurgent Opposition*	*Institutions Captured by Opposition*	*Majority Controls One or More Institution*
Federalists	1789	1801	House	1789-1801
Jeffersonian	1801	NA	NA	1801-1829
Jacksonian Democrat	1829	1841-43	House, Senate, Presidency	1829-1841; 1843-1861
Lincoln Republican	1861	1879*** 1893-95	House, Senate; All Three	1861-1893
System of 1896 GOP	1897	1913-19**	House, Senate, Presidency	1895-1913; 1919-1933
New Deal Democrat	1933	1953-55**	House, Senate, Presidency	1933-1953; 1955-1981
Reagan Republican	1981*	1993-95	House, Senate, Presidency	1980-1992; 1994-2008

Source: Congressional Quarterly Guide to US Elections

* ~ Effective control of House of Representatives in Budget Battle of 1981
** ~ The House and Senate were captured first (1911 & 1947), then the Presidency.
*** ~ The Dems won the majority of votes for president in 1876.

This does not suggest that the opposition was necessarily acting responsible in gaining control of all three veto holding governing institutions. Indeed, it is more likely that they rode electoral fatigue and downturns in the economic cycle back into contention. However, we should not discount the threat that the loss of institutional control plays within the rules of the macro legislative game. It is only with the benefit of historical hindsight that we see that only the first, weakly institutionalized, Federalist governing majority was unable to recover from the normal, twelve year point, resurgence

of the opposition. In all other cases, the governing majority had to undertake energetic efforts to quickly recapture (or prevent loss of) control over veto holding institutions and protect their status quo by appealing to secondary coalitional elements.

To repeat, it is thus my contention that governing majorities recapture lost institutional control and counter attack against a resurgent, and probably irresponsible, opposition by appealing to under-mobilized, secondary, factional elements of their coalition. This builds on the conclusions of Miller and Schofield who have persuasively argued that partisan leaders will reposition themselves in order to maximize the resources they can gain by appealing to activists – whose policy desires are more extreme than both the electorate and rest of the coalition (2003, 2008). My theory reframes the central issue in this discussion in terms of why majority regime managers seek these new sources of energy when they do. Indeed, rather than seeing these appeals as "politics as usual" in a multidimensional space, as Miller and Schofield do, I argue that managers appeal to secondary faction members usually (and exactly) when they are struggling to maintain control over veto holding institutions. In arguing such, my framing provides key insight into issues of timing, which are missing in their account. Indeed my view predicts that self-interested majority affiliated politicians abandon the strategy of maintaining the most efficacious relationship possible vis-à-vis the line of conflict and their own coalition exactly when their authority is threatened by loss of institutional control over veto holding governing institutions. It is illogical (and most probably counterproductive) for majority managers to appeal to extreme elements in their party earlier, as this can

threaten coalitional cohesion before it is even organized around primary, unifying, preferences.

Partial evidence in support of my contentions is provided in two parts. First, the only case that does not fit the pattern still follows the logic of my theory. Here the Jeffersonian governing majority did not appeal to extreme elements within its coalition until later in the cycle precisely because the opposition Federalists collapsed rather than became resurgent. Indeed, charges of rising extremism during this era only came after these former Federalists later joined the Jeffersonians to create a National Republican wing of the party (Malcolm 1925; Remini 1993; Holt 1999).

For my second line of argument I piggy-back on John Gerring, who has demonstrated (without realizing it) that the ideological orientation of the political parties have twice changed right after the resurgence of the opposition (1998). The first time this occurred was in the early 1920s right after the Republican party responded to Wilsonian Democratic control over all three veto holding governing institutions by appealing to their base in a way that necessitated changing from a National to Neoliberal ideological orientation. The second time this occurred was in the early 1950s when the Democrats responded to a de facto conservative legislative majority and actual popular Republican president by appealing to their base and changing from a Populist to Universalist ideological orientation.

One could also argue that, while there was no change in ideological orientation in the Republican party following the antebellum resurgence of the Democrats, there was a shift in the substantive thrust of their policy focus. The resurgence of the Democrats in

the 1870s clearly shifted the GOP's nationalizing program from focusing on Civil War Reconstruction to building an Industrial economy (Bensel 2000). Furthermore, a case can be made that both the Democratic expansion of the nation, thru war with Mexico under Polk, and the family values laden legislative resurgence of the GOP, under Newt Gingrich's leadership, are also examples of instances when coalition managers recalibrated to pursue secondary coalitional priorities in response to preceding losses of control over all three veto holding institutions (ie: in 1841-43 and 1993-5). In both of these cases, good argument can be made that these moves, while bringing temporary satisfaction to the governing majority, also unleashed forces that brought (and appear to be bringing) down their respective coalition's dominance. An impressionistic reading of the historical record thus confirms the connection between the timing of majority shifts to secondary priorities and their countering of a newly resurgent opposition.

Even though it often results in no better than divided government, Table 3.2 suggests that appeals to secondary coalition members for authority restoring energy are successful in preventing loss of control of government to the opposition. The resurgence of a secondary priority pursuing majority initially helps the governing majority defend their favored pathways of development from unwanted change in direction. However, beating back a resurgent opposition thru secondary factional appeals also has its costs. As I've argued, the secondary priority policy positions that the governing majority take up in return for additional activist support are more extreme than those taken to initially establish the axis of conflict and assemble the coalition, and therefore do not position the coalition in its most effacious position. Indeed, the pursuit of secondary, factional,

priorities must often be pursued through unpersuasive stratagems that not only undermine coalitional cohesion, but also inspire the opposition to begin to behave responsibly again. Thus, the shift to secondary priorities eventually is responsible for pushing entropy up to the historically contingent tipping point. This creates space for the opposition to reposition itself and practice the preemptive politics that tip politics into crisis, sending entropy skyrocketing, and opening the critical juncture that makes reordering possible.

Reordering

In this third section, I concentrate upon the reordering opportunity and how the efforts of a responsible opposition gain effective control of all veto points and provide it the ability to form a new governing majority. Here I center my attention upon events within the reordering critical juncture, spotlighting how the accomplishment of three specific tasks allows a new governing majority to be formed. Once again, these tasks relate to:

1) shifting the main axis of partisan conflict
2) assembling a new majority coalition that allows effective control of federal governing institutions, and;
3) institutionalizing a new governing regime.

These tasks then become the core of a model of new governing majority formation that is used to guide study and reinterpretation of the most-likely, "typical," cases in the fourth chapter. This model is further developed to account for the possibility that political leaders can fail in their initial efforts to create a new governing majority. This full model

is used to guide study and interpretation of the least-likely, "crucial," cases in the fifth chapter as well.

Before moving ahead, let me further explore each of the basic tasks within the model:[25]

1. *Shifting the main axis of partisan conflict* entails raising the salience of certain conflicts within the social structure over others by focusing on public policy matters related to those conflicts. As Lipset and Rokkan emphasize in their classic exploration of party system development in Western Europe, numerous "latent strains and contrasts" exist within the social structure of any society. At any given moment, a "hierarchy of cleavage bases" exists, in which certain conflicts are more polarizing than others (1967: 5-6). These cleavages manifest themselves in the political arena when they become the focal points of public policy conflict. I posit that if a new governing majority is to be formed partisan leaders (usually the president or presidential candidate) must raise the salience of a new political conflict by altering political discourse and focusing on a public philosophy and set of policy issues related to that cleavage (be it support for states' rights, support for capitalism/the free market, or support for federal intervention in economic policy). It is important to emphasize, however, that this does *not* mean that any partisan leader, at any time, can necessarily shift the main axis of partisan conflict. Either affiliation with the governing majority or a lack of high entropy conditions usually prevents them from doing so.

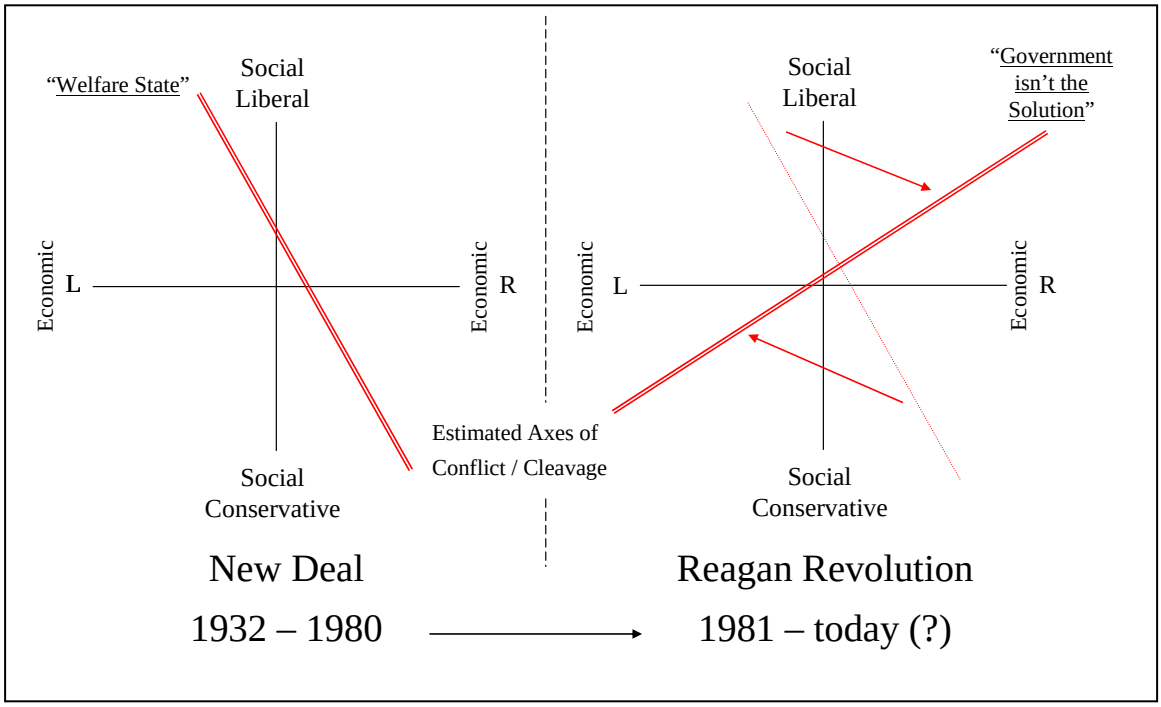
Nor can leaders succeed by simply focusing on only one policy issue. In a country like the United States, known to be exceptional for both its two-party system and high

levels of social differentiation, what is required (when context is favorable) is to take a stand on a controversial issue or series of issues (such as tax policy, regulation of the market, and staunch opposition to Soviet communism), and link it to a broader, more fundamental, but also more nebulous political worldview (such as Reagan's claim that government is not the solution it is the problem). To some degree, this worldview must be connected to the "legitimacy" and "capacity" gaps that are used by the responsible opposition to repudiate the status quo. Disputes over this political worldview, in effect, becomes the main axis of partisan conflict.

Example of this dynamic is provided in Figure 3.2 below, which depicts how the main axis of partisan conflict shifted between the New Deal and Reagan eras. This depiction is congruent with Petrocik (1981) and Miller and Schofield's (2003, 2008) findings, which were based on investigation of pooled time series data. Within this figure, each of the two sides separated by the dashed line depicts the same two-dimensional policy space where the electorate is arrayed and political competition takes place. The left side of the figure depicts the New Deal Era (here defined as 1932-1980), while the right side depicts the Reagan Era (1981-today?).[26] Along the x-axis preferences are arrayed along an economic dimension with classic left and right poles corresponding to support for labor/collective vs the market/individual. Along the y-axis preferences are arrayed along a 'north/south' social values dimension with poles corresponding to liberal/cosmopolitan and conservative/traditional positions. The double red line(s) depicts where the main axis of conflict cleaves the electorate into Democrat and Republican halves.

In the first era, the axis of conflict (defined simply here as support for the "welfare state") cleaves the electorate in such a way that the Democrats, who would be on the left side of the line, control the center point of the space. This means the majority of the population favors their definition of what politics is about, and gives them coalition forming advantages. It should also be noted that the line of conflict cuts across the electorate in a fashion that is almost perpendicular to the x-axis. This means that economic issues are more divisive, while social issues are crosscut.

Figure 3.2
Shifting the Main Axis of Partisan Conflict – the New Deal to the Reagan Era



In the second era, the line of conflict has shifted (now being about "government is the problem"), and rotated to the right and down. Importantly, this now places the center of electoral space on the Republican side, giving them (all else being equal) the advantage in election winning and coalition forming. Note the axis of conflict cuts much closer to the center in the Reagan era, meaning that this advantage is much narrower. Furthermore, while this line of conflict still divides along the economic dimension, this aspect has become less salient and the social dimension has become more so.

2. *Assembling a new majority coalition* is a task that is obviously quite related to shifting the axis of conflict, and yet is also distinct from it. Whereas shifting the partisan cleavage more specifically involves the ideological and what Polsky (2002) has called the "discursive" basis of a new majority, assembling the actual majority coalition is primarily concerned with bringing new elements into the fold, converting previous opponents, and uniting disparate wings. It is not enough, in other words, to merely change what politics is about. It is also necessary to do so in a way that builds a new majority by bringing together different groups within the social structure, many of which may not agree with each other on important issues (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Axelrod 1972). This requires a complicated series of considerations. First, a president must be aware of the current social-group profile of his partisan coalition, and envision the ways in which it can be expanded. Second, he must focus on a unifying set of primary priorities that can bring a new majority of social groups together. Third, he must also be prepared to compromise on important matters where different wings within the social coalition do not agree. Here, issues of sequence and timing can be very important (Pierson 2004). In

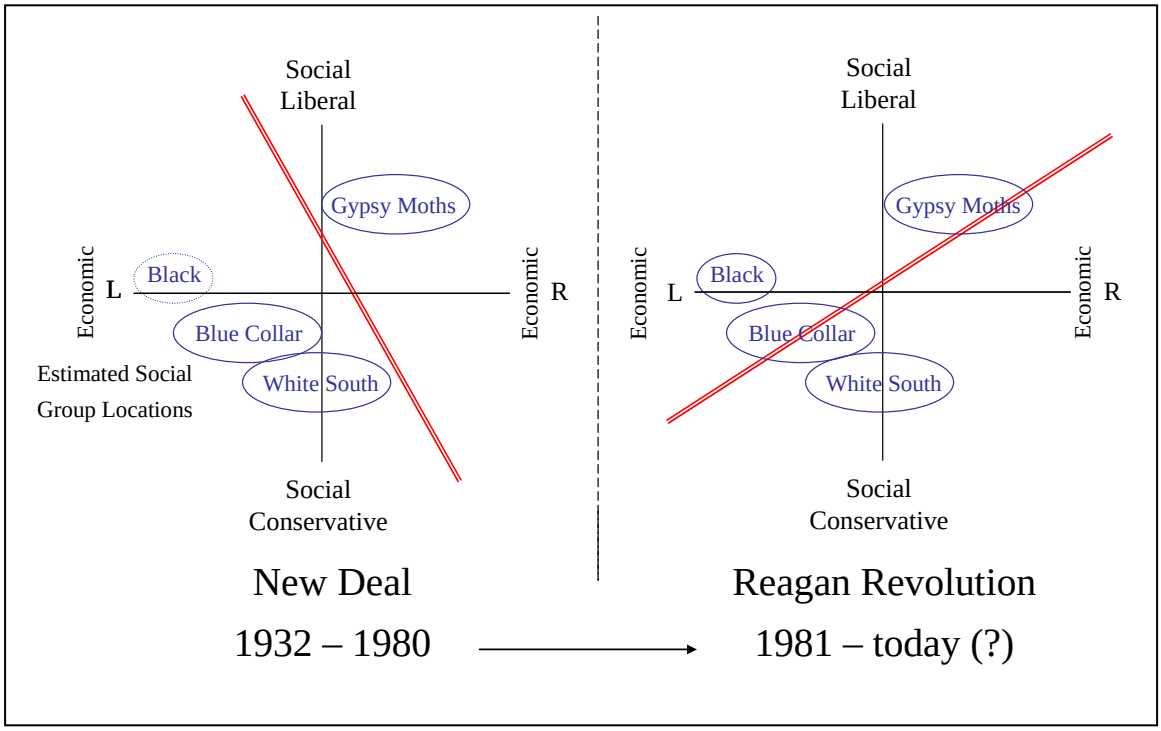
short, constructing a new majority coalition requires a fair amount of political skill, as well as a willingness to cater to diverse interests.

To visually represent what this task entails, I build on the last example. In Figure 3.3 I add my estimation of the space that key social groups occupy within the previous set up. While few groups are monolithic enough to be able to be thought of in such simplistic terms, I agree with the many sociologists, social group historians, and political scientists, who have found that racial, religious, and other social dimensions of group membership play a significant role in shaping political behavior (Berelson, Lazrsfeld and McPhee 1954; Kleppner 1970, McSeveney 1972). Thus, I focus on social groups that were impacted significantly by the shift in the axis of political conflict and therefore played an important role in the assembly of majority coalitions.

In the New Deal Era, socially conservative "Blue Collar" workers and "White Southerners" were cleaved into the Democratic camp by their support for the economic dimension of the welfare state. This put them in coalition with "blacks" who were increasing drawn to the Democratic party for economic reasons as well. The assembly of these groups (among others) into a New Deal collation comports with Axelrod's famous analysis of "where the Democratic votes" were coming from (1972). One of the important groups on the other side of the axis of conflict during this era was the "Gypsy Moths," a group of socially liberal but pro-market Republicans from both coasts of America. Although I could, I don't use the term "Rockerfeller Republicans" for this group because, as the figure shows, they mostly stopped being Republican during the Reagan era.

The Reagan era shift of axis of partisan conflict cuts across both the gypsy moth and blue collar workers, leaving most of the former and up to half of the later in coalition with new partisan affiliates. Furthermore, it can be seen that the new cleavage also places blacks squarely in the Democratic ranks and shifts the white southerners into the GOP coalition. This depiction squares well with the accounts of writers like Petrocik (1981), Carmines and Stimpson (1989), and Black and Black (2002) who have verified these shifts in coalitional make-up in detail. Thus, while figure 3.3 does not provide

Figure 3.3
Assembling a New Majority Coalition – The New Deal to Reagan Eras



much detailed insight about how the Republicans assembled their new majority coalition, it does give good indication of how this task is related to the first task and it does show which groups were key to the dynamic.

3. *Institutionalizing a new governing regime* ~ is the final, and possibly most variant task necessary for reordering success. In essence, this final task entails creating or reordering political structures in a way that enables a new governing majority to promote the policy priorities and political advantage of the social coalition underpinning it – as well as to close the capacity and legitimacy gaps that undermined the former majority. Through creating new institutional and programmatic realities, the new governing majority thus unites its coalition around the achievement of a substantive program, grants itself democratic legitimacy as the provider of necessary change, and locks in a new axis of partisan conflict through the creation of long-term social constituencies. Such efforts also set off path dependent processes that can reinvigorate and renew what had been a high entropy political system by bringing institutional relationships back into efficacious positions – especially by bringing capacity in line with societal needs. The ideal-typical example of this method of governing regime institutionalization is the creation of the welfare state by Franklin Roosevelt and the new Democratic majority (Plotke 1995).

Governing regime institutionalization also entails altering political and electoral structures in a way that helps the new partisan majority maintain an advantage in the electoral arena for an extended period of time. Such efforts either change the "rules of the electoral game" or build new structures of power, thereby cementing dominance. An

example of this first type of institutionalization of partisan advantage was demonstrated when in the 1930s several Democratically-controlled states switched their congressional selection method from a multiple district scheme to an at-large scheme that ensured the entire delegation would be filled with New Deal supporters (Congressional Quarterly 1994).

In all of this, it is important to emphasize that institutionalizing a new governing regime is not tantamount to reordering previous institutional relationships wholesale, nor is it expected to all happen all at once or at a single pace. The process of governing regime building is in many ways akin to "layering" a new set of institutions upon a mass of others that are already in existence (Tulis 1987; Schickler 2001; Orren and Skowronek 1998, 2004).[27] Therefore, every new partisan regime is a hybrid of new and old elements and, due to a number of varying factors,[28] it may be impossible to predetermine how much institutionalization is necessary to succeed in this task.

However, since many institutional and policy continuities are expected, I argue that it is a mistake to judge institutionalization of a new governing majority by only the magnitude or immediacy of change it brings. Evaluative focus should rather concentrate on how institutionalization decreases entropy by returning relationships to more efficacious positions and thereby reinvigorating / renewing the polity by changing the direction of political development (or at least its rate of change).[29] Therefore, while institutionalization processes are continuous and more research is needed on this topic, I suggest that this task should be considered complete for purposes of creating a new governing majority when a new status quo is created by successfully locking in new

preferences and partisan advantage. This may occur at a fairly obvious point in time, like it did – in the eyes of many – during the New Deal, when the Supreme Court "switched in time to save nine," or it may occur at a very difficult to pinpoint time, like it did whenever Reagan's socio-market conservatism became the late twentieth century status quo.

Accounting for Reordering Failure

In the context of new governing majority formation, reordering failure is defined as occurring during the reordering opportunity period when political leaders, who have favorable context, fail to accomplish all three of the previously discussed tasks. Whether this failure occurs because of unforeseen contingencies, like the sudden onslaught of an economic depression, or because poor leadership is practiced, politics fails to be reordered. A reordering failure must therefore be thought to increase entropy and prolong the reordering opportunity; thereby keeping the window open for other political leaders to accomplish the three tasks. In these instances, the pathways by which formation of a new governing majority proceeds along are protracted, opening the possibility for unexpected outcomes. In contrast, new governing majority formation is most easily recognized when all three reordering tasks are successfully and rapidly completed by one president. In such cases, when an individual president rapidly succeeds in reordering, development tends to proceed along the relatively straightforward, easily discernable pathways that Skowronek has documented.[30]

However, when an individual president fails to complete all three tasks, reordering then tends to proceed along protracted pathways that are considerably longer, more complex, and less immediately discernable. Along these more protracted pathways, I suggest, previously available courses of action may close off and cease to be viable options but newer ones may emerge to take their place. Indeed, there are legacies of failure as well as success, and the reordering opportunity is altered in important ways.[31] First, failure to reorder amidst a favorable context results in the loss of control over the opportunity to new leaders who are able to recognize the opportunity's existence and take advantage of it. In the process, those who did not successfully reorder are often discredited, while control over the opportunity may shift to unlikely quarters (i.e. dark horse candidates or affiliates of the old political regime). Second, failure closes off possibilities that might have existed before. Options to select specific axis of conflict, coalitional configurations, and institutional / policy solutions may be lost. Third, failure creates problems that did not exist before. Failure thus complicates the reordering process by adding to the sense of crisis, increasing entropy, and bringing to the fore new challenges that must be overcome. This can make accomplishing the reordering tasks more difficult and it can also open whole new avenues of advance. Consequently, reordering failure causes the sequence to proceed along protracted pathways that may be far less elegant or distinct than in situations in which the initial reordering attempt is successful.

Initial failure to complete the reordering tasks can, therefore, allow for multiple presidents to contribute to the completion of the three reconstructive tasks, as well as

sometimes allow for one partisan coalition to seize control of the reconstructive opportunity from another. I therefore suggest that cases of reordering failure provide the first articulated American case examples of what Capoccia and Keleman refer to as "near misses" within a critical juncture. "Near misses" are associated with historical episodes that, while not especially notable for the amount of change that is wrought in their wake, nevertheless warrant classification as critical junctures because they exhibit high levels of "structural fluidity and heightened contingency" (2007, 352). In short, these are cases where the final outcome produced can represent a mere change in the rate of change of a number of indicators, resulting in a mixed-bag modification of the pre–critical juncture status quo.[32]

A Flow Chart Model of The Governing Cycle

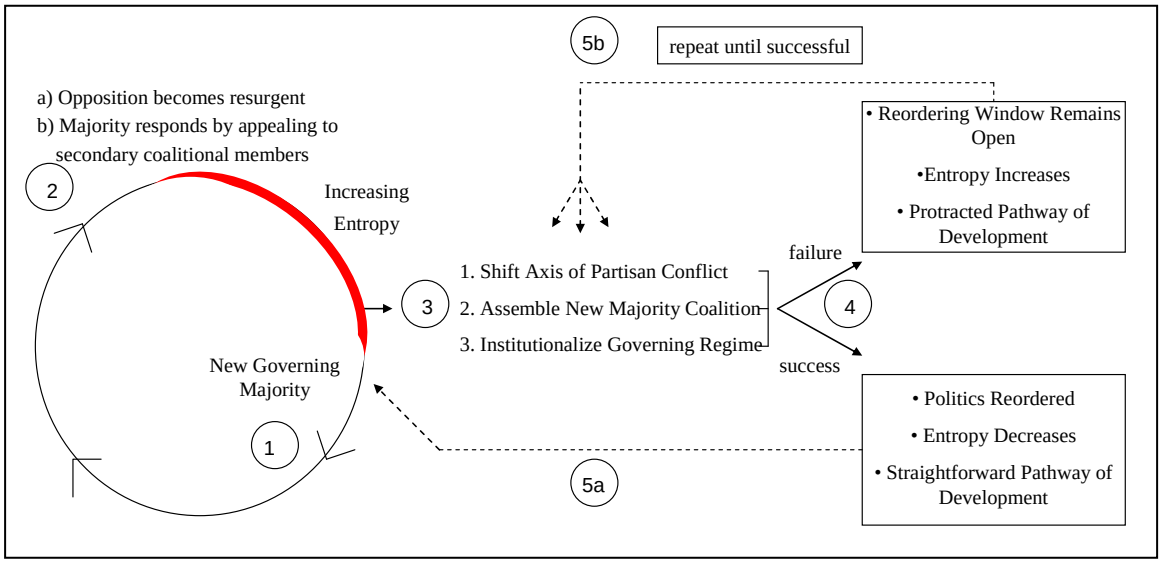
In this fourth section, I first present a flow chart model that depicts the entire governing cycle dynamic as I have described it in this chapter. I then discuss the expectations that this model sets for developmental analysis, both in typical cases of straightforward success and crucial cases that witness reordering failure(s). These expectations can then be tested against the historical record using a multi-method research design that both uses case study and regression analysis.

Figure 3.4 provides graphic representation of this model. In it, the cycle begins at point one (1) with the formation of a governing majority by the first partisan group that is able to capture effective control over all three veto holding institutions and use their governing authority to institutionalize their priorities and advantage. Historically, I

contend that George Washington and the Federalists created the first, albeit weakly institutionalized, governing majority. Institutionalization initiates path dependent processes that secure the majority's axis of conflict, coalitional make up, and governing regime, moving the model from point one to point two (2).

At this point, which has historically occurred 10-14 years after the governing majority first gains effective control over veto holding institutions, two events almost inevitably occur. The first of these events is the opposition becoming resurgent. In every case, save the Jeffersonian governing majority, this has resulted in the opposition's effective capture of two or more veto holding institutions (see Table 3.2). Indeed, in every case, save the Lincoln Republican governing majority, the resurgent opposition has

Figure 3.4
The Dynamics of the Governing Cycle:
With A Full Sequential Model of New Governing Majority Formation



captured all three. This resurgence, in all probability by an "irresponsible" opposition, constitutes a clear and present danger to both the governing majority's control over institutional development and their dominance. It thus engenders the second event at point two. This is the appeal of the governing majority to secondary factional members within their coalition for the additional energy and support needed to regain control of veto holding institutions. This, in every case save the very first Federalist governing majority, has worked, moving the model from point two towards point three (3).

Along this pathway, however, the majority's switch to pursuit of secondary priorities slowly undermines the efficacy of key relationships and increases systemic entropy. Indeed, by point three (3) the majority comes to be seen as: a) captured by extreme elements; b) resorting to illegitimate non-persuasive stratagems to advance their priorities, and; c) increasingly unable to close capacity gaps perform the work needed to govern in the best interests of the polity. Finally, at the historically contingent point three (3), these conditions inspire a newly responsible opposition.

The rise of the responsible opposition, who are bent on repudiating the majority and offering themselves as agents of necessary change, pushes entropy past its threshold and ignites a firestorm of civic discontent. This causes entropy to further spike and opens the reordering opportunity, a critical juncture in which the space for human agency opens and leaders are challenged to address the ongoing political crisis through the reordering of relationships. This entropy lowering undertaking occurs through the formation of a new governing majority, which as Figure 3.4 demonstrates requires the accomplishment

of three tasks: 1) shifting the axis of partisan conflict; 2) assembling a majority coalition, and; 3) institutionalizing a new governing regime.

If partisan leaders are able to capture effective control of all three veto holding institutions and complete all these tasks the succeed at branch point four (4). This results in politics being reordered, entropy being decreased, and development proceeding upon the new but straightforward pathways represented along five-alpha (5a). There is now a new governing majority and the cycle has come full circle, back to point one. However, if efforts to complete all three tasks end in reordering failure at branch point four then, politicsare not reordered, entropy continues to increase, and development proceeds upon the protracted and less straightforward pathways represented along five-bravo (5b). Reordering failure then returns development to the tasks of point three and gives others the opportunity to form a new governing majority. The governing cycle will thus not come full circle until the three tasks are successfully achieved and entropy is addressed.

If there is anything to this theory, then the historical record ought to demonstrate that there are two basic variations of the pattern of new governing majority formation. Those that follow the pathway of straightforward success (4 to 5a) ought to be characterized by decisive shifts in partisan control over veto holding institutions (in what realignment theory would refer to as a critical election), where former opposition parties quickly exchange places with past majority parties. This will be followed by the straightforward completion of the three reordering tasks. As a result of this rapid reversal of fortunes, some forms of institutionalization may exhibit a more "punctuated" character as political outcomes take a quick and decisive turn.[33] This "pathway of straightforward

success" scenario is the pattern that the "typical cases" – discussed in the next chapter – are expected to conform to.

Conversely, those instances of new governing majority formation that follow a pathway that includes at least one instance of reordering failure (4 to 5b) may not be characterized by a single decisive shift in partisan control over governing institutions, or in the sudden completion of the reordering tasks. Indeed, along the more protracted pathways of development that ensue, one or more unexpected outcomes may occur. First, there may be more than one, or none at all of the "critical election" type shift in control over all three veto holding governing institutions. In one possibility, a newly responsible opposition may be able to repudiate the majority and decisively capture control only to fail at reordering. If this occurs, the former majority may repudiate them in return. This could then decisively swing control over veto holding back into their hands. If they then succeed in completing the three reordering tasks themselves, the historical record will record two decisive shifts in control and back-to-back governing majorities under the same partisan banner.

This possibility thus requires the old governing majority to take advantage of the rare opportunity to "make itself new" by assembling a new majority coalition itself. This new majority coalition would then have to (re)institutionalize their regime – both to pursue their coalition's expanded interests and to lower entropy through reordering. In this case, while there would not be a change in the partisan identity of the new governing majority, there would be changes in its' uniting axis of conflict, its' coalitional make up, and in the direction / rate of change of institutionalization. However, given the greater

continuity maintained in this scenario, this institutional change may appear muted, drawn out, and unsuccessful in comparison to the cases that follow the pathway of straightforward success. Nevertheless, if entropy is lowered and a new governing majority is formed by completing the three tasks, then a full swing of the governing cycle has been completed. This protracted scenario is exactly the one that will be argued best describes the crucial "System of 1896" case.

A second possibility occurs when there are multiple attempts and failures to complete the three tasks. In such cases, the shifting of the main axis of partisan conflict, the assembly of a new majority coalition, and / or institutionalization of a new governing regime might happen by extremely protracted processes. If, in the end, the opposition party were to finally complete the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority they might find themselves in a much weaker governing situation. Not only could their control over veto holding governing institutions be more tenuous (limiting their depth of legislative power and control over development), but they could inherit an institutional regime that has, during the elongated high entropy state, grown in directions that are not aligned with the new majority coalition's priorities and preferences.[34] Nevertheless, if entropy is overcome by eventual success in completing the three tasks necessary for formation of a new governing majority, a full swing of the governing cycle has been completed. This less straightforward scenario is exactly the one that I suggest best describes the least-likely, "Reagan Revolution" governing cycle case that I reinterpret in chapter five.

Reordering failures may then turn on two events. First, the opposition might loose the initiative to form a new governing majority if it does not succeed in shifting axes, assemble new coalitions, or institutionalize priorities and advantage. Second, any partisan group can loose the initiative to form a new majority coalition if it succeeds in either shifting the main axis of partisan conflict or institutionalizing in such a way that it ends up deepened their minority status or shattering their coalition and returning them to minority status. Interestingly, both possibilities occur in each the System of 1896 and Reagan Revolution cases.

[1] APSA 1950. "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 44, No. 3, Part 2,Supplement.

[2] I acknowledge that a presidential veto can be overridden and that argument can be made for inclusion of the Judiciary as an institution with veto power over in the legislative process (via review). However, as this power is negative, narrow, and exercised both post enactment and reasonably rarely I drop it from consideration in development of my general model. I also acknowledge that the legislative "game" is far more complex than I am depicting it. Indeed, one would have to include committees, executive actions, state governments, bureaucracies, party organizations and interest groups into a realistic model. As my research question concerns the broadest patterns of governing control, my research strategy therefore aims at establishing theory and modeling at the macro level. Here, analysis of control of the three federal institutions with veto power over legislation is thought appropriate

[3] A short list of the features that further diffuse power in the Congress would have to include: 1) the multimember composition of its two divided houses, which create social choice and collective action problems that are not adequately met by political parties with weak disciplining power (Aldrich 1995; APSA 1950), 2) the diverse, faction breaking, continental size republic its members represent (Madison); 3) the differing constituencies and electoral horizons of each house, 4) the committee system, and 5) internal rules.

[4] Observers have long understood the importance of path dependency. For example Plato once noted that, "once we have given our community a good start, the process will be cumulative." Tocqueville also once observed that "The [initial] coming of the Federalists to power is, in my opinion, one of the most fortunate events that accompanied the birth of the great American Union. …their government at least left the new republic time to settle in and afterwards … a large number of their principles were introduced under the creed of their adversaries; and the federal constitution, which subsists in our time, is a lasting monument to their patriotism and their wisdom." (2000: 168-169).

[5] The definition of a governing majority is: The elite led partisan coalition that maintains sufficient power to thwart opposition efforts to supplant them by uniting on the winning side of the main axis of political conflict, assembling a majority coalition, and dominating the politics of an era though securing initial effective control over all three veto holding legislative institutions and setting off path dependent processes via the institutionalization of their preferences and political advantage. See Polsky 2002 for his definition of a "partisan regime."

[6] While it is somewhat beyond the scope of this broad theory establishing project, I acknowledge that necessarily heterogeneous mass parties may experience "de facto" divided government when certain coalitional factions join with the opposition to form an effective majority – especially over secondary issues. The New Deal era witnessed de facto divided government early on over social issues when conservative southern Democrats joined with Republicans to block civil rights legislation. The New Deal governing majority was not, however, similarly divided over the first order priority of establishing and protecting the welfare state. For more on primary and secondary coalition priorities see Schattschneider 1960.

[7] By this I don't mean to imply that Orren and Skowronek's mid-range view of political reality, as being dominated by the incongruent and simultaneous operation of multiple orders constructed at different points of time, is completely wrong. I do however conclude that it is wrong to assume that this "intercurrence" is the most important thing that is going on in (Orren and Skowronek 1994, 2004; Skowronek 1993). Indeed, I conclude that intercurrence only describes the field of action where macro level political games are played. As such it may impact how the game is played, but it is not and does not become the game. Therefore, I conclude that Orren and Skowronek's non-systemic view is institutionally partisan… in the broadest sense of object and pejorative meaning.

[8] Note, "governing majority" does not include the institutionalized regime that is the product of their governance within the parameters of its definition. Concepts like "party system" (Chambers and Burnham 1967), "political regime" (Skowronek, 1993), "political order" (Plotke 1995), and "partisan regime" (Polsky 1997) all focus on the institutional product while linking it to a agents included within the definition.

[9] In Skowronek's terms the majority are regime affiliates while the minority is the opposition (1993).

[10] It is possible, when filling a Senatorial vacancy, for two Senators to be elected at the same time. However, even then each Senator is elected to a different Senate "class" ensuring that proportional rules are not used.

[11] The first two subtasks derive directly from Schattschneider (1960) and are used by Petrocik (1981), Sundquist (1983), and Miller and Schofield (2003, 2008) to extend the mass electorally focused realignment paradigm. Sundquist lists leadership as amongst the five variables "that determine when, in what form, and on what scale a realignment takes place" (41-42). Miller and Schofield consistently focus on the role activists play in the dynamic.

I focus on leaders (especially the president) because their role has been under examined in the realignment literature, and because I conclude that they and not the electorate are key to the dynamic -- being the only ones that can succeed in framing conflict, assembling coalitions, and institutionalizing preferences. However, I acknowledge, as James MacGregor Burns notes, that "leadership is (a) reciprocal process mobilizing… in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers" (1978: 425). Burns, James MacGregor. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.

[12] In all hypothesized historical cases the new governing majority captured effective control of all three veto holding institutions in one election (1788, 1800, 1828, 1860, 1896, 1932, 1980). The presidential founder of each regime was then re-elected. Each selected a 'favorite son' to follow them (the Radical Republicans picked Grant), who was then elected. Not all favorite sons win reelection for themselves (indeed only Madison, Grant, and Truman succeed). Those charged with lack of fidelity to cleavage establishing principles do not (J. Adams; Van Buren; Taft; GHW Bush).

Note this is a narrower conception of the term "favorite son" as is employed by Skowronek. He sometimes refers to non-reconstruction following affiliated presidents by this term.

[13] There have only been six two term presidents that were not new governing majority founders or favorite sons (Monroe, Wilson, Eisenhower, Nixon, Clinton, Bush Jr.).

[14] The following four paragraphs drawn from Nichols and Myers 2008.

[15] While it is beyond the scope of this work to detail how institutions and players such as the Congress, Court, bureaucracy, party managers, and interest groups relate to one another and interact within this systemic environment, I acknowledge that this is critical to future development of my theory. For now, I focus on the president because as party leader and only nationally elected office holder they are constitutionally positioned to have the greatest motivation and ability to accomplish the nationally focused reconstructive tasks (see Federalist #70). They do not, however, act in a vacuum.

[16] See Burnham (1970, pp. 6-10) for thoughts on this topic that inspired mine, and Polsky (2002).

[17] Reagan's election in 1980 presents as a tough case. Not only did Reagan only gain temporary effective control of the House in the very early budget battles, but the GOP was unable to gain control of this institution until their majority was threatened by the Democrats unified capture of government in 1992. However, I argue that since Reagan completed the three tasks and the GOP and electorate reacted, as I predict they should, to the gaining of Democrat control in 1992 … that Reagan did indeed form a new governing majority. Full explanation of this case rests on an understanding of how previous failures (from Goldwater thru Carter) lead to unexpected outcomes along protracted pathways of development (see Nichols 2004).

[18] Theoretically, there are multiple ways for leading factions to bisect an electorate and remain in the majority, but realistically in a two party system regime managers must dance with both the axis of partisan conflict and coalition that brought them there.

[19] This is why Orren and Skowronek insist that institutional regimes never truly work together, and why they discount the macro level regime management project (1999).

[20] Furthermore, because even a responsible opposition is, in many ways, primarily concerned with gaining authority, it must be considered possible for them to reorder and institutionalize a gap between what is good for the new governing majority and what is good for the polity from the get go.

[21] The reapportionment of seats after the 1800 census undoubtedly helped undermine the Federalist power base as well… but this does not explain their electoral implosion in former strongholds.

[22] I note that the timing of the opposition's resurgence coincides with Schlesinger's periodicity for mood cycles and Merrill, Grofman, and Brunell's similarly paced vote / seat share cycle. I do not, however, hold that either of their theories account for the pattern.

[23] Unlike the other governing majorities, the under-institutionalized Federalists never recovered from losing control of all three veto holding institutions.

[24] The Republicans lost control of the House in the election of 1874 (and would only control this institution for 4 out of the next 20 years). They also lost the Senate in the election of 1878 (but would regain control of this institution from 1880-1892).

[25] Discussion of tasks one and two are adapted from Nichols and Myers (2008), while discussion of task three was extended in this dissertation first and then adapted for an extension of this work (Nichols and Myers, forthcoming). In all cases, I was the guiding author in the articulation of these points and take responsibility for their shortcomings. I thank Adam for his detailed work on tasks one and two.

[26] This dating suggests that the era might be ending with the election of Democratic president Barack Obama and a Democratically controlled Congress.

[27] In addition to the sedimentary layering process institutionalization is wrought through "path dependent" processes (North 1990; Pierson 2000b; Mahoney 2000) in moments of "punctuated change" (Eldridge and Gould 1972; Krasner 1988; Burnham 1999) and also through institutional "conversions" (Carpenter 2001; Thelen 2003; Streeck and Thelen 2005).

[28] My initial thoughts suggest that these factors include: the severity of problems needing addressing, the state of previous institutional configurations, the amount of resistance opponents can bring, and the availability and amount of new sources of energy.

[29] This formulation was suggested to me by Jill Nichols. While political science likes to conceive of things in terms of "right direction / wrong direction," calculus is the math of the rate of change of direction. In this context, it is theorized that the formation of a new governing majority brings about a significant change in the rate of change of a whole host of factors, which corresponds to a change in direction in political terms. See Aldrich and Niemi (1996) for one attempt to compile a composite measure of change in similar terms.

[30] This section was reworded after Nichols and Myers received feedback from an anonymous reviewer on their forthcoming work. My concept of entropy was first articulated in this dissertation. I use the less conceptually developed term 'enervation' in my co-authored works. In all cases, I am the lead author of this subject material.

[31] My formulation of the concept of "reordering failure" was inspired through discussions with Jeff Tulis. His own "legacies of failure" work focuses on how failure to accomplish X at time 1 can influence the accomplishment of a better version of X at time 2 (Mellow and Tulis, 2007). My formulation differs in focusing on how failure to accomplish reconstruction at time 1 closes off possibilities and complicates a very different (and not necessarily better) reconstruction at time 2.

[32] Capoccia and Keleman go further and argue that it is possible that there may be no change resultant of actions within a critical juncture. I do not disagree that, in some cases, a full restoration of the pre-critical juncture status quo is possible. However, because I link the phenomenon of reordering to the amelioration of high entropy conditions, we argue that a restoration of the pre-critical juncture status quo would leave the underlying problem unsolved and the critical juncture open for others to exploit.

[33] As institutionalization is thought to be a response to rising entropy, it should vary in accordance to the magnitude and depth of these challenges. Additionally, as institutionalization is thought to relate to shifting governing outputs to favor the priorities of the new majority coalition, it should vary in relation to the shift in the main axis of partisan cleavage. Finally, institutionalization may be hampered or accelerated by contingent events.

[34] The most salient example may be the direction in which constitutional law developed after 1964. Many lines of jurisprudence, from privacy/abortion, through equal protection developed in directions against the Reagan Republican governing majority's eventual preferences. However, the Republicans were never able to undo any major line and had to settle for retarding their growth.

Chapter 4: Case Study – Straightforward Success

"Great moments are born of great opportunity." – from the movie Miracle

In the previous chapter I laid out my theory of the governing cycle and modeled its dynamics. In doing so, I've attempted to emphasize conceptual clarity and causal specificity and thus follow methodological exhortations to political scientists engaged in historically oriented qualitative research (Gerring 2003; Goertz 2006). What follows in the fourth and fifth chapters of this dissertation is the first part of my mixed methods research design. This consists of two case study chapters conducted using the theory and flow chart model provided earlier to guide analysis. In the fourth chapter I focus on one non-contentious, "typical," case of straightforward success in new governing majority formation. This case is the Andrew Jackson reordering. I then draw similarities between this case and other likewise typical cases using a matching strategy. In the fifth chapter I look at one unexpected or "crucial" case that includes an instance of reordering failure followed by protracted pathways to success (Gerring 2001; Brady and Collier 2004). This case is the System of 1896. I then apply inferences from this protracted case of success via a matching strategy to the Ronald Reagan case.

The flow chart model presented in chapter three is used within these chapters' case study framework to provide evaluative criteria for the five stages of development that should be witnessed within each case. This allows me to both compare the historical record against theoretical expectations within cases and to demonstrate congruence across

cases. By combining these two techniques, I am able to generalize my findings to several other suspected cases of new governing majority formation without analyzing them in depth. In this way, I am able to argue that my theory covers all of the straightforward cases of reconstruction that Skowronek's theory accounts for while providing new insight on other cases – like the Founding Era, System of 1896, and the Reagan Revolution. Due to the theory generating focus of this dissertation, the following analysis aims at using the historical record to establish a level of confidence for my case studies and new interpretations rather than breaking new ground within the historical record. Secondary sources are therefore relied upon extensively.

These two case study chapters are intended to resonate against Skowronek's established regime theory framework, just as the later regression analysis chapter is. They provide initial evidence that my theory and model of the dynamics of the governing cycle are correct. This evidence suggests that my model handles Skowronek's cases with ease and better handles the tough cases. These chapters lend support to my key claim that new governing majority formation and political reordering present themselves as opportunities, based on high entropy conditions that don't go away until addressed, rather than as brief moments based on the context of some sort of a priori regime vulnerability. Significantly, the design also enables me to demonstrate that it is success in completing the tasks necessary to form a new governing majority that brings about the reordering of politics, rather than the nebulous concept of reconstructing the political regime. Taken together, these two findings provide me the means of both falsifying Skowronek's theory and rendering new interpretations of important eras within American political

development. It is these interpretations that then allow me to further test my theory through mixed method design and regression analysis in the sixth chapter.

A Note on Case Selection

Out of the five presidencies that are considered reconstructive by Skowronek, I elect to examine Andrew Jackson's as the most typical of the group. Unlike Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt, whose more transformative impact can plausibly be attributed to the extreme national crises each faced, and unlike Reagan, whose efforts were blunted (in Skowronek's telling) by the "thickening" of the mature welfare state, Jackson's challenge was moderate and his success median.[1] Because of this, the Jackson presidency constitutes a "typical" case. Therefore, I expect that the contours of the historical record should fit well with my theory and the expectations set out in my five step flow chart model. More specifically, the case should conform to my expectations about two important things: first, what brings about high entropy conditions, and second what happens when a president encounters these conditions and then succeeds in accomplishing the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority. In short, analysis of the Jackson case should reveal straightforward success in political reordering.

Additionally, because the Jackson case is also one of the main cases that Skowronek uses to support his theory, my ability to explain it reveals that my own theory cannot be dismissed for failure to explain a typical case. While this is, admittedly, a low first hurdle, I will use my ability to account for this case to argue that governing cycle theory also explains three other non-contentious reconstructive presidencies that

Skowronek discusses. Examining each of these presidencies through the prism of my five step flow chart model would require more time than I have for this dissertation. However, later in table 4.1 I will summarize how Jefferson, Lincoln, and F. Roosevelt – all of whom were handed a reconstructive opportunity in Skowronek's telling – were able to quickly and convincingly complete the reordering tasks of my model in much the same straightforward way as Jackson. Extending this broad matching method, I will also suggest that Jackson's case outlines how George Washington and his lieutenants succeeded in completing the three tasks as well, thereby creating a short-lived but distinct Federalist governing majority.

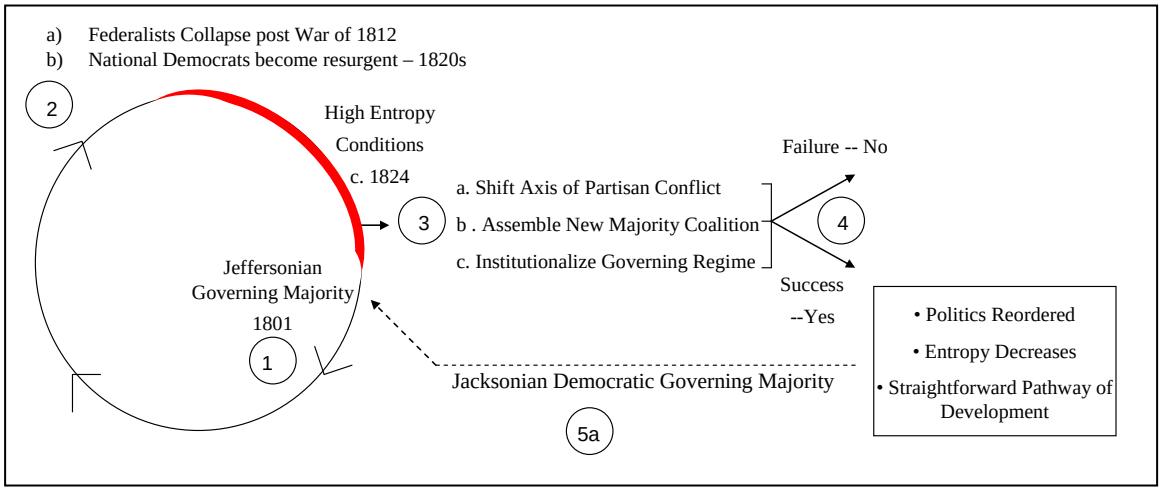
Straightforward Success in the Era of Andrew Jackson

In this section, I examine a typical example of new governing majority formation by analyzing the events surrounding, and during, Andrew Jackson's presidency. This case is typical because a whole host of previous scholars have agreed that a Jacksonian Democratic "party system" (or governing majority) was established through the ascent of "Old Hickory" to the presidency (McCormick 1966, 1967; Hofstadter 1969; Burnham 1991; Skowronek 1993; Magliocca 2007). By presenting evidence that Jackson encountered high entropy conditions and then successfully completed each of the tasks necessary to form a new governing majority, I show that this case is wholly consistent with my new theory concerning straightforward cases of new governing majority formation. I then use this analysis to draw conclusions about other cases.

Jackson assumed office at a time when there were signs that politics had entered high entropy conditions (see figure 4.1). After the War of 1812 the Federalist party quickly collapsed, so much so that by the time of John Quincy Adam's administration, the members of the old opposition had joined a Nationalist oriented faction within the Jeffersonian governing majority – causing much inter-coalition strife (event 2b). This followed in the wake of the completion of much of Jefferson's program and the election of a band of "War Hawks" in 1811. After this, Madison began to pursue the secondary coalitional priorities of this faction (event 2a), and soon had the United States at war with Great Britain. This had the desirous partisan effect of destroying what remained of the Anglophile, succession contemplating, Federalist party. However, it wasn't long after this infusion of bellicose energy that new problems arising from a quickly expanding and democratizing nation were began to reveal institutional, "capacity," gaps. It was, however, the "corrupt bargain," which secured Adam's victory in the election of 1824 and opened a perception of a legitimacy gap that ended up tipping politics into the high entropy conditions that spurred Jackson and his allies into responsible repudiation of the status quo (event 3).

In the reordering opportunity (between events 3 and 4) Old Hickory was first spurred to foster a new governing philosophy that broke with past anti-partisan political practice. This was required because by the time Jackson was elected in 1828, a regionally based, North-South line of political conflict had deepened, and Jackson and his surrogates (particularly Martin Van Buren; [Cole 1984; Sibley 2002]) realized they needed to find a way to shift the main axis of partisan conflict to a position that cross-cut

Figure 4.1
Straightforward Success in the Jackson Era



the slavery issue and north-south axis of cleavage (Brown 1966). Consistent with my model (event 3a), Jackson accomplished this task through linking a series of critical policy issues with a broader governing philosophy, centering on "reform and retrenchment," that would eventually demarcate the scope of partisan conflict for a generation.[2] Jackson next pursued the task of uniting a new majority coalition (event 3b). The path he took to accomplish this was, interestingly, selected not by choice but by necessity. It began with his first move to tackle the infamous, potentially coalition splitting, Indian removal "problem" that had been pressed on him by his allies in Georgia (Satz 1975; Cave 2003; Rolater 1993). This issue dominated debates in the 21st Congress forcing him to exercise leadership and unite friendly northern, southern, and western elements.[3]

In examining how Jackson completed the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority, I depart somewhat from previous accounts and follow Magliocca (2007) by emphasizing his support for (and realization of) Indian removal as a critical first move in achieving overall success.[4] In doing so, I claim that, while it is hard for any modern observer to defend Jackson's removal policy on moral terms, his policy is at least understandable in partisan and coalitional terms. As I argue below, Jackson's support for Indian removal went a long way toward the achievement of tasks 3a and 3b – shifting the main axis of partisan conflict dividing the electorate and assembling a new majority coalition. Furthermore, I argue that the passage of a comprehensive Indian removal bill also played a minor but important role in the completion of task 3c– institutionalizing a new governing regime.

In considering this third task, I take note of Jackson's more well-known policy achievements, which institutionalized a governing regime that both advanced his coalition's priorities and secured its political advantage. He accomplished the "priority advancing" first goal most famously through his veto of the re-charter of the National Bank, as well as through his fight against other aspects of federal encroachment on state prerogatives. Jackson secured the second "political advantage" goal by helping to create the world's first mass political party. In this way, a new governing regime was successfully formed. By accomplishing these three tasks, development proceeded successfully through branch-point number four (4) in a straightforward manner via route (5a), and then witnessed the formation of a new Democratic governing majority, the

lowering of entropy, and the closing of the reordering opportunity. The cycle then began anew.

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Let me now go into further detail about how Jackson was able to complete the three tasks necessary for the formation of a new governing majority in a straightforward manner. In the first task (3a), shifting the main axis of conflict, it is important to remember that Jackson assumed office during an era in which a regionally based, North-South cleavage was deepening. He and his surrogates understood this (Brown 1967), and went about the task of shifting the main axis of conflict to a position that cross-cut the North-South cleavage while maintaining a majority over the National Republicans (later the Whigs). Jackson first began accomplishing this task through linking a critical policy issue (Indian policy) with a broader governing philosophy, which would eventually demarcate the scope of partisan conflict for a generation (Russo 1972; Remini 1981; Rolater 1993).

In promoting the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which expelled Native Americans from their ancestral lands in the southern United States, Jackson probably felt he was acting in everyone's best interest and easily connected the policy to a broader ideology of American freedom and national security (Remini 1981: 220). This moderate states rights philosophy, which Jackson encapsulated in the slogan "reform, retrenchment, and economy," effectively became the political worldview that many observers and scholars have agreed united Democrats from different sections of the country (Van Buren 1967; McCormick 1966; Gerring 1998, Magliocca 2007). Through linking the Democratic

Party with this philosophy, Jackson helped to rally support for Indian removal even among representatives from states, such as New York and Pennsylvania, which no longer had a so-called "Indian problem."

Indeed, the degree that Jackson was able to unite Democrats around the new governing philosophy articulated in support of Indian policy demonstrates the important role this bill played in shifting the main axis of conflict. As historian Fred Rolater has demonstrated, other than procedural votes, Indian policy became *the single most partisan issue* throughout the entire 1830s, producing a higher percentage of party line voting in Congress than internal improvements, tariffs, or the Bank question (1993).[5] This line of division became sharper after the Supreme Court issued a "preemptive opinion," in Worcester v Georgia, against Jackson's Indian policy in 1832. This opinion's "crude equal protection principle" was a direct constitutional challenge to the Jacksonian governing philosophy (Magliocca 2007: 47). Marshall's ruling was seen, properly, as an attempt to invent a new federal power, and it united Democrats on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line in defense of Indian policy by reminding them that being a Democrat meant standing against this sort of federalizing "corruption." This is exactly the type of action that would be expected of those facing a perceived legitimacy gap.

Jackson's decision to pursue Indian removal not only helped to shift the main axis of conflict in American politics, it gave greater ideological coherence to the nascent Democratic Party and went a long way toward helping him assemble a new majority coalition. It must be remembered that although Jackson took office in March 1829, Congress did not convene until December of that year, giving pro Jacksonian

Congressmen and Senators no opportunity to come together in the legislative act that Aldrich reminds us is critically important in assembling a governing coalition (1995). Indian removal must thus be seen as the first policy issue that forced Jackson to exercise leadership and unite friendly northern, southern, and western coalitional elements of a collapsing era of one-party dominance. It separated friends of the administration from all others. As Jackson himself realized – had removal failed, so too might have his hopes of putting together a new coalition (Remini 1984).

The Jacksonian Indian removal battle thus demonstrates one of the possible perversities of new governing majority formation. This can occur when the need to shift the axis of conflict, assemble a new majority coalition, and / or institutionalize new solutions to capacity gaps runs counter to prudential or even moral / ethical concerns. During the removal debates, Jackson informed Democratic members of the House that he had bet his entire administration upon passage of the measure. He thus strenuously urged them to oppose an attractive counter-proposal to first send a commission to survey the unknown lands to which Indians were to be removed, haranguing them that "delay means death to removal" (Remini 1981: 235). While Jackson was probably right, and was thus able to secure passage of his preferred version of the bill by the narrow margin of 102 to 97, there were tragic consequences that resulted from his necessary haste in uniting his coalition around a new axis of conflict. The deaths of thousands of Native Americans on the infamous "Trail of Tears" should remind us that the crisis conditions that come with the reordering opportunity may not provide the best context to forge and implement sound, or even humane, policy.

Yet, by acquiescing to local demands to secure the removal of the "five civilized nations," Jackson was able to keep leaders from several potentially dissatisfied southern states (especially Georgia) from bolting his coalition and following the lead of radicals in South Carolina. These forces, led by Jackson's own Vice President John C. Calhoun, were already trying to align Democratic politics around a different axis of conflict by threatening to nullify federal laws. By pushing for Indian removal, Jackson neutralized these North / South polarizing forces and helped assemble a majority coalition around the more moderate (and cross-cutting) principles for which he stood. Indeed, a month before the passage of the Indian Removal Act, Jackson clearly signaled that he would not lead a coalition supportive of Union threatening nullification when he famously broke with Calhoun and stunned his mainly radical audience at a Jefferson's Day banquet by toasting: "the Union; It must be preserved" (Remini 1981: 235).

While I argue that the true significance of Indian removal lay in how it helped cleave political conflict and served as a rallying point for the assembly of a new majority coalition, this policy also helped to complete the third task (3c), institutionalizing a new governing majority. It did so by altering the constitutional relationship between the Federal Government and Native Americans (Magliaccoa 2007). Until 1828, the federal government provided leadership, under the Senate's treaty powers, in questions concerning relations between the Indian tribes and American citizens. However, in December of 1828, Georgia's legislature made their frustration with (and perception of a capacity gap over) their inability to deal with native Americans living within their borders known by unilaterally declaring that all Indian residents of the state would fall

under its jurisdiction in six months. This precipitated a crisis where Jackson had to choose sides between supporting Federal prerogatives and coalition members who could bolt to Calhoun's faction if left unsatisfied. That he made his choice in a way that both out-flanked the Nationalists and appeased the southerners, and thus organized groups into a new majority united under his principles, demonstrates how specific tasks and political choices, rather than abstract "reconstructive" context, guided Jackson's institutional alterations. In doing so, Jackson's Removal Act both overturned the idea that tribes had sovereign rights that were to be protected by a benevolent Congress, and it abandoned forty years of "civilizing" policy. It, in effect, altered the governing regime through political re-construction of Constitutional norms (Whittington 2001), and thus responded – in a very cruel way – to a capacity gap that some southerners had decided existed within the polity.

Further analysis along the institution reordering dimension reveals that, while Andrew Jackson's role in the creation of the first mass political parties certainly was his most important in terms of establishing a lasting legacy (Van Buren 1867; Wallace 1968; McCormick 1967; Jaenicke 1986), no discussion of his governing regime altering accomplishments would be complete without brief mention of how his famous veto of the re-charter of United States Bank brought key governmental outputs in line with the core governing philosophy of the new majority Democratic coalition. No other action of Jackson's demonstrated the depth of his desire to terminate centralized power within the country. Thus, even though the bank veto certainly was not the shrewdest macroeconomic move (again demonstrating the incongruence that can come to exist

between what is best for the new majority and the polity), it strongly advanced the philosophy of the minimized state, worked extremely well as a partisan call to battle, and reordered institutional relationships within the state.

Influentially, it was the first veto message in history that cited political, social, economic, and nationalistic reasons as well as constitutional arguments in support of a decision to veto. The meaning of this development was not lost on its audience. It amounted to a clear reordering of relations between branches of government through its assertion of presidential authority and privilege to act as an equal in the legislative process. Presidential preference would hereafter need to be accounted for in the halls of Congress. The veto further advanced presidential power and recalibrated institutional relations by flying in the face of the Supreme Court's previous ruling on the Bank (in McCulloch v Maryland [1819]) and arguing that each of the three branches of government was an equal and independent interpreter of constitutionality. In Jackson's words, the authority of the court was not permitted to control the executive, but to "have only such influence as the force of their reasoning may deserve." These changes unmistakably represent the institutionalization of new approaches to policy and constitutional questions.

Equally important from the perspective of new governing regime institutionalization was Jackson's bold appeal for public support at the end of the message. Never before (or since) had a president so clearly challenged the people to unseat him if they did not approve of his policy. This action, in the wake of Jackson's subsequent electoral victory in 1832, not only affirmed his governing philosophy, it

strengthened his coalition, gave support to his anti-Bank policy, all-the-while setting early precedent for future rhetorical appeals to the public (Tulis 1986). Previously, partisanship itself had been viewed as a dangerous form of factionalism. Now, however, partisanship was being legitimated as an ally of democracy and a tool against moneyed aristocracy (Van Buren 1967). Using the same logic, Jackson also defended the spoils system and mass political parties, two of the most enduring institutional developments of his presidency.

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In providing this short analysis of Jackson's straightforward success in forming a new governing majority, I wish to suggest that Jackson's actions upon becoming president were not determined for him by his stance as a president opposed to a weakened regime, or by his need to shatter or affirm order – as Skowronek would assert. Abstract context and abstract leadership challenges did not drive Jackson to support Indian removal, break with Calhoun, or veto the national bank. Jackson could have continued to ignore southern demands for action on Indians and risked a Southern, pro-nullification coalition forming against him. He could have acted as he did on removal but also acquiesced to Calhoun's radical states rights position, thereby championing a governing philosophy that would have made the Democrats flirt with becoming the same sectional coalition they did in 1860. He could have favored continued federal protection of Indians and attempted to lead from a nationalist position. Yet he did none of these things.

That Jackson acted the way he did when faced with high entropy conditions – shifting the main axis of partisan conflict, assembling a majority coalition, and modifying institutional relations to create a new governing regime that favored his coalition's priorities and advantage – shows that he successfully acted within his reordering opportunity to usher in a new era of Democratic dominance in American politics. This case therefore constitutes a prototypical example of straightforward success. Jackson took advantage of conditions, made all the right moves to complete the three tasks necessary for new governing majority formation and thus created a new status quo while reinvigorating American politics. Let me now turn to discussing the other straightforward cases of successful new governing majority formation.

The Other Typical Straightforward Cases

The final assessment supporting Andrew Jackson's straightforward success is depicted graphically below in Row 4 Table 4.1, amidst the other typical cases. Here he is listed as being the chief contributor, whom upon encountering high entropy conditions led the Democrats to complete the three tasks necessary to forming a new governing majority. Also listed in this table are the other cases that I contend are typical cases of straightforward success, which if analyzed in case study analysis would reveal the same sequence of events that were exhibited in the Jackson case.

Of these cases, Skowronek and other regime theorists – most notably Landy and Milkis (2000), Crockett (2002), and Polsky (1996) – have already argued that Jefferson, Lincoln, and FDR were successful reconstructive presidents. Additionally, even the

critics of the realignment paradigm tend to agree that party system realignment occurred around the 1860 and 1932 elections (Mayhew 2002). Therefore, I do not hold it as exceedingly controversial to suggest that these three cases conform to the same pattern of straightforward success that was suggested in my theory and demonstrated in the Jackson case.

Table 4.1.
Summary of Typical Cases of Straightforward Success

Chief Contributors	*High Entropy Conditions*	*Shift Axis of Conflict*	*Assemble Majority Coalition*	*Institutionalize Governing Regime*	*Final Assessment*
Washington	X	X	X	X	Straightforward Success
Jefferson	X	X	X	X	Straightforward Success
Jackson	X	X	X	X	Straightforward Success
Lincoln	X	X	X	X	Straightforward Success
FDR	X	X	X	X	Straightforward Success

Skowronek has already documented that high entropy conditions existed prior to Jefferson, Lincoln, and FDRs presidency. While he refers to this context in terms of the concept of a "weakened regime" and the abstract challenge of "disjunctive" politics (1993), rather than in terms that link the condition to a systemic cause – like high entropy – his excellent description of the presidencies of John Adams, Franklin Pierce, and

Herbert Hoover reveals many symptoms of this condition were present. In each case these symptoms included: a newly responsible opposition bent on repudiation via exploitation of legitimacy gaps, rising coalitional tensions within the old governing majority as they complete their original purpose and strain under pressures to service secondary priorities, and the opening of capacity gaps.

Many well known facts from the historical record signify high entropy conditions, including: 1) the rise of the Jeffersonian faction in the shadow of John Adams' imploding cabinet and the legitimacy gap that was opened by his support of the Sedition Acts; 2) the quick coalescence of a new Republican opposition, in the wake of the rising salience of the slavery issue, and the mutual fears that unpersuasive stratagems would decide the issue;[6] 3) the union of labor, Catholics, and the poor, behind progressive leaders that Gerring notes had been ideologically driven from the GOP (1998), just as the worst economic contraction in national history revealed wide capacity gaps. Thus, I argue that evidence already exists to support my contention that there should be an "X" placed in column 2 of rows 3, 5, and 6 to signify that Jefferson, Lincoln, and FDR encountered high entropy conditions when they came to the presidency and therefore enjoyed the opportunity to reorder.

Each of these three presidents then succeeded in accomplishing the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority in a straightforward manner. Again, Skowronek's own work provides much support for this interpretation, especially in documenting how each of these presidents accomplished the third task of institutionalization of a new governing regime (row 5). Realignment and party system

scholars have provided much evidence in support of the first and second tasks as well. Of note here, are the works of Sundquist (1983), Petrocik (1981), Miller and Schofield (2003, 2008), and Brewer and Stonecash (2009). Jefferson was able to secure a new main axis of conflict in support of a more republican based governing philosophy that was securely tied to the leadership of the Virginia Dynasty and their "3/5 clause" exploiting southern allies. His institutionalization, while faint compared to more modern examples, certainly changed the rate of growth of the nationalization of power (as compared to what Hamilton would have preferred) and resulted in territorial expansion and reversal of support for the British within foreign affairs (Smelser 1968). Lincoln, in turn, oversaw a major shift in the axis of conflict – one that brought outright succession and a tumultuous (and very poorly managed) war to preserve the Union (Fehrenbacher 1962; Holt 1978). It, of course, caused coalitional and institutional arrangements to basically reflect northern regional interests (James 2000; Bensel 2000). Little needs to be said to support the argument that Roosevelt succeeded shifting the axis of conflict to a position that solidified a new, and deep, Democratic majority coalition around the project of institutionalizing the New Deal welfare state (Allswang 1978; Plotke 1995).

Evidence also already exists to support my contention that these three presidents should be given credit in rows 3, 4, and 5 for being the chief contributor in: shifting the axis of conflict, assembly of a majority coalition, and institutionalization of a new governing regime. Therefore, in final assessment, each of these presidents – like Andrew Jackson – helped lead a straightforward reordering success (row 6).

None of the interpretations that I have presented so far should surprise regime theorists in the slightest. It is, however, possible that party system and realignment scholars might provide some argument against crediting Jefferson for successfully reordering. Indeed, while I am unfamiliar with anyone having actually made a similar argument against Skowronek, it might be logical for them to critique both of us on our similar interpretation of these events as they have tended to view the entire period from 1788 to the 1820s as one complete "first party system" (Goodman 1967; Burnham 1991; Aldrich 1995).[7]

My response to this line of critique ultimately concludes that resolution of the issue seems to come down to a question over what unit of analysis one is interested in. Before taking up this argument let me start by differentiating myself from Skowronek's interpretation of the era, reminding that I hold that there was a Federalist governing majority established by Washington before the Jeffersonian was established after the election of 1800 (row 2). The reason for the discrepancy appears, upon reflection, to stem from theoretical differences that ultimately cause us to locate our starting points in different places. While many hold that Skowronek is primarily interested in how context impacts the presidential leadership challenge,[8] close reading of his theory, and the title of the book, indicate that he thinks this relationship is, in some ways, backwards. He ultimately believes that persistent presidential disruptive agency drives the dynamics of the political time phenomenon – by inevitably causing friction between the president and the dominant political regime.[9] Presidential agency thus accounts for and structures the political time dynamic that presidents then have to act within. His work is therefore a

study in “the politics that presidents make” (1993) – “in political time” (2008) – and not analysis of the presidents that political time / context makes. This results in him having to start his analysis with John Adams rather than George Washington, because – and here I speculate somewhat because Skowronek never addresses the issue – there is no context of political time before Washington’s agency helped create it.

This, of course, ignores that the political system preceding Washington’s presidency, tethered as it was to an Articles of Confederation regime, was surely suffering from high entropy conditions that needed addressing. The fact that the Second Constitutional convention decided that the institutional solution to this crisis was a constitutional, regime type, change should not obscure the universal systemic truth that once high entropy conditions engulf a political system, something must be done to reorder the system and renew politics. This reminds us that all regime types, all different kinds of polities, and all political systems are subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

Focus in this dissertation has concentrated on how the U.S. Constitution both shapes the unique way in which entropy increases in the American polity, and determines the very particular tasks that must be accomplished to overcome the problems associated with it. Indeed, analysis has focused at the partisan regime level and identified a cyclical pattern only because of how the Constitution unintentionally forces entropy to build up and be dealt with – not because anything in the nature of entropy requires it to be this way. In some regime types, increasing entropy could lead to almost random bursts of revolutionary change. In other regimes the condition could be handled incrementally.

Whatever the mechanisms and dynamics that entropy worked by in the Articles of Confederation, the fact remains that high entropy conditions prevailed in American politics when Washington took office. This fact drives my consciously and consistently contextual theory, which views presidents merely as leading actors caught up in the tides of entropy, to start my analysis with the first president. I then defend my assertion that there was a Federalist governing majority that began in 1788 by taking one step further back than Skowronek and suggesting that high entropy conditions arose rather shortly after the Revolutionary War, under the Articles' loose, confederation style, stability undermining, structure. I don't think I'm being controversial in this assessment. Although some Anti-Federalists of the day didn't agree that it was time for reform, they lost this debate to stability concerned Federalists (Lienesch 1988). Not only were they able to convince the country that entropy was high enough to convene a second Constitutional convention, but – after completely exceeding their mandate there – they were also able to convince people to proceed with a new Constitution.

As additional support for my proposition that there were high entropy conditions before Washington became president, I cite evidence from the Federalist papers, some of which (especially a few of Hamilton's) clearly aim to convince that crisis conditions either exist or are about to befall the country if measures are not immediately taken to staunch liberty threatening anarchy in its tracks. Though these papers were written as (very intellectually powerful) propaganda pieces, they followed in the wake of events like Shays' rebellion and the inability of the Confederation to pay wartime debts, which lead some Continental Army officers to resist demobilization and others to worry about

foreign intervention. Therefore, their dire assessments seem very well likely to have been accurate. I thus argue that evidence already exists to support my claim that high entropy conditions did, indeed, exist (for entirely different reasons than underlie the governing cycle) prior to Washington becoming president (column 2, row 2).

I argue that Washington became the chief contributor to, and indispensible man in, the process of completing the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority. Along the first two dimensions of success, my claim finds support in John Aldrich's work on the origins of political parties (1995). Here Aldrich argues that by the second Congress, a governing coalition, affiliated with the president, formed in response to social choice problems associated with legislating. This coalition was not formally organized by Washington's favorite lieutenant, Alexander Hamilton, into a mass or organizationally sophisticated party-like structure, but it rallied support in favor of an administration supported, Federalist governing philosophy, centering on concrete policy objectives that delineated the main axis of conflict within the Congress. With this rudimentary party instrument, the Federalists gave life to the U.S. Constitution's broad outline. Many of his contemporaries argued that were it not Washington at the helm the project would have failed. That it was Washington at the helm helped to set many precedents that, as Tocqueville later alluded to, set the young nation on the right path in its critical early stages of development (2000, 168). I therefore conclude that evidence already exists to support my claim that Washington led the first straightforward success in new governing majority formation.

Entropy did quickly arise within the Federalist governing regime, bringing it to its demise mere twelve years after its founding, which is, upon reflection, not very surprising. Indeed, given the Constitution's three fifths clause, the very shallow institutionalization of partisan advantage of the day, the implosion of Adam's cabinet, and the widespread dissatisfaction (and perception of a legitimacy gap that opened) with the Sedition Act, it seems almost inevitable that the Federalists would become the only governing majority in history not to be able to rebound after the opposition became resilient at the dozen year mark. The Federalists failure to recapture control of any veto holding governing institutions after this point, despite their successful attempt to preserve a bit of their hegemony in the Supreme Court (see Hirschl 2004), demonstrates why the governing majority must respond vigorously to the opposition gaining unified control of government.

This brings me back to my first argument in support of two governing majorities existing between 1788 and 1828. If one's level of analysis is the party system, and the main interest is in determining whether the election of 1800 serves as a significant pivot-point in the institutional development of the political party one can probably conclude that there was one party system. One would still have to admit, however, that dominance over this party system was divided between eighteenth century Federalists and nineteenth century Jeffersonians. However, if one's level of analysis focuses one on determining if Jefferson's presidency marked a shift in the axis of conflict, eventuated the assembly of a new majority coalition, or acted as a pivot-point for institutional development that

changed the rate of nationalization, then one must conclude that there were two governing majorities that existed during this same period.

In this chapter, I argued in support of the proposition that there have been five cases of straightforward reordering success in American political history. I have thus used case study analysis of Jackson's reordering and a matching reinterpretation strategy to suggest that Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and FDR were also the chief contributors to straightforward new governing majority formations. By leading the way in accomplishment the three necessary reordering tasks, all of these presidents have overcome the high entropy conditions that they encountered upon taking office. In rising to the challenge when it matter the most, it should not surprise us to find that this group of presidents is amongst the most venerated in American history. I will test this assumption connecting reordering with presidential success in the sixth chapter. This will give added strength to these interpretations through regression analysis that also tests the generalizability of my theory. However, before I do this, let me explore what happens when presidents fail to reorder and development proceeds upon protracted pathways.

[1] While I am unfamiliar with anyone making the argument, realignment scholars could argue that Jefferson was not a reconstructive president based on the fact that they tend to hold that one single party system existed from 1788 to the 1820s. I further discuss this topic later in the chapter.

[2] These issues included Indian removal, internal improvements, tariff reform, and of course Jackson's famous opposition to the National Bank. See: Russo (1972) and Remini (1981).

[3] The western states contained less than 3% of the population in 1790 and 28% in 1830. The need to assemble a new majority coalition in 1828 was as much as anything resultant of this demographic shift. I thank Adam Myers for bringing these facts to my observation.

[4] On Indian removal as policy also see: Rogin (1975), Satz (1975), Prucha (1981), and Remini (2001).

[5] See also Russo 1972.

[6] I would argue that both the Republicans and Democrats had perceptions of widening legitimacy gaps. Many Republicans had concerns that slavery would be forced on the nation via Supreme Court rulings like the infamous, Dred Scott case, while many Southern Democrats had grave concerns – within their states rights philosophy – that Republican federalism meant the end of state rights centered federalism as they knew it (to say nothing of the institution of slavery!)

[7] I remind that this is another reason why I consider Jackson, and not Jefferson, the most typical case within Skowronek's pantheon.

[8] From a perspective like mine, which concludes there are cycles in American politics for systemic reasons, the challenge of presidential leadership is tied to the context of the time it is practiced. This aligns the relationship between context and agency to what many, incorrectly, think Skowronek's view already is. Without incorporation of my appreciation for the possibility of reordering failure (to save agency from determinism), a purely contextual rendition of Skowronek would however change the title of his book to the "The Presidents that Politi(cal Context) Makes."

[9] As has been discussed, Skowronek does not link the same shattering "impulse" directly to regime resilience / weakness, indeed I argue that he ultimately connects "weakness" to nothing specific because he does not discuss issues relating to timing and persistence.

Chapter 5: Case Study – Protracted Success

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." – *Teacher's Manual* (1840) by Thomas H. Palmer

In this chapter I continue to apply the theory and flowchart model developed in chapter three, only this time I use it in study and interpretation of two historical eras for which there is no scholarly consensus about. In the earlier of the two eras, which I analyze in a case study, realignment scholars have long debated whether a "System of 1896" was constructed.[1] Here Skowronek essentially agrees with the skeptics by concluding that there was no regime reconstruction during the period. The later "Reagan Revolution" era, which I apply findings and present a new interpretation of, has befuddled realignment scholars expecting a critical election to occur, while leading Skowronek to conclude that it provides evidence that cyclical dynamics are waning in American politics.[2]

I contend that both eras are fully understandable as cases that witnessed protracted successes in reordering. As such, they should conform to my expectations of what happens when high entropy conditions are experienced but leaders initially fail to complete the three tasks necessary for the formation of a new governing majority. In cases like these, development should proceed along more complex pathways further complicating the eventual accomplishment of the tasks and producing outcomes that deviate somewhat from normal expectations. Yet, because the three tasks are eventually

completed, a new governing majority is formed, politics is reordered, and entropy is lowered.

A Note on Case Selection

As I have alluded to several times in this dissertation, Skowronek and others have argued that the early part of the 1890s witnessed a "rare opportunity" for a new leader to "press reconstructive possibilities" (Skowronek 1993: 48-49). However, because Grover Cleveland refused to take advantage of this opportunity, no presidential reconstruction occurred during this time (also see Crockett 2002). As a result, the events of this era constitute a "crucial" test case for my new theory.[3] According to conventional case study methodology, a case may be considered crucial if it "reveals a result that is unexpected" or "deviant" with respect to established theory (Gerring 2001: 220). With respect to Skowronek's theory, finding that a successful "System of 1896" reconstruction / reordering occurred would constitute such an unexpected result. If, using my flow chart model as a guide, analysis returns a positive finding that there was indeed a new governing majority formed during this time this would then strongly suggest that governing cycle theory is superior to Skowronek's regime theory in handling this tough case.

A case can also be considered "crucial" if it is one that is too well known or debated within scholarship to ignore. The "System of 1896" era also qualifies as crucial on these grounds because it is a very contentious case within the realignment literature. I do not frame this debate in terms of realignment literature, because I look at the phenomenon from a top down perspective rather than realignment's bottom up view. I

suggest that the examination of this case, which is somewhat unusual as it suggests there were back to back Republican party systems, promises to tell us a lot about the normal by throwing the garish case into sharp relief against the clear case. The System of 1896 case should thus highlight how failure to form a new governing majority increases rather than decreases high entropy conditions. This crucial "System of 1896" case shines light on how leaders, given the opportunity, may fail to reorder.

Previous cyclical accounts do not conceive of leading actors as operating within windows of opportunity that only close when specific tasks are completed. As a result, none of the other cyclical accounts have concluded that high entropy conditions in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century America created a "critical juncture" or opening for agents to impact the course of political development (Collier and Collier 1991). Therefore, they have either not recognized that a very different but ultimately successful reconstruction did indeed occur during this time, or they have misunderstood the dynamics and timing of how a new governing majority was indeed created. All of this is clarified through analysis of the "System of 1896" case.

Specifically, I argue that the events of this time period exemplify how leaders initially handed a reordering opportunity (in this case, Grover Cleveland and then William Jennings Bryan) can fail to complete the tasks necessary to form a new governing majority. It is this failure that forces development to proceed along protracted pathways in which one partisan coalition (in this case, the Democratic Party) can cede control of the ordering opportunity to another (in this case, the Republican Party). As this case demonstrates, the tasks can then subsequently be completed (in an admittedly

awkward fashion) by more than one individual (in this case, William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt). Once all tasks are completed, a new governing majority is formed, entropy is lowered, the window of opportunity closes, and politics are reordered (albeit, in this case, in a very hybrid fashion).

In addition to providing a crucial finding, I use the "System of 1896" case to suggest how the Reagan Revolution era can be newly interpreted. Here I apply my findings about how failure to reorder can complicate eventual success, thus combining elements of the same matching techniques utilized in the last chapter with more in-depth narration to present a fresh perspective on events from the 1960s to 1980s. While this strategy is deemed sufficient for my purposes of presenting a new interpretation of this contentious era in American politics, I am hesitant to suggest that this method can, in half of a chapter, establish the detail that is necessary to qualify this brief examination of a very complex sequence of events as a full case study of the era. Therefore, just as I did in the fourth chapter with the other typical cases, I present my interpretation of this era as application of my "System of 1896" findings without holding that this case can stand alone at this time. However, as I have mentioned before, I use the results of my interpretation to opperationalize regression analysis in the next chapter, which provides an additional measure of confidence that my take on the Reagan Revolution is correct.

In the Reagan Revolution case, I argue that leaders stretching all the way back to Barry Goldwater and Lyndon Johnson failed to complete the tasks necessary to form a new governing majority. High entropy conditions then prevailed until Reagan was able to once again awkwardly cobble together a hybrid solution to the reordering tasks and

successfully create a new (albeit narrow) governing majority. I then briefly discuss whether failure or Skowronek's idea of the thickening of the welfare state better explains final outcomes in this case and conclude, after comparing this chapters two cases, that conditions of failure are necessary and probably sufficient to explain Reagan's protracted reordering.

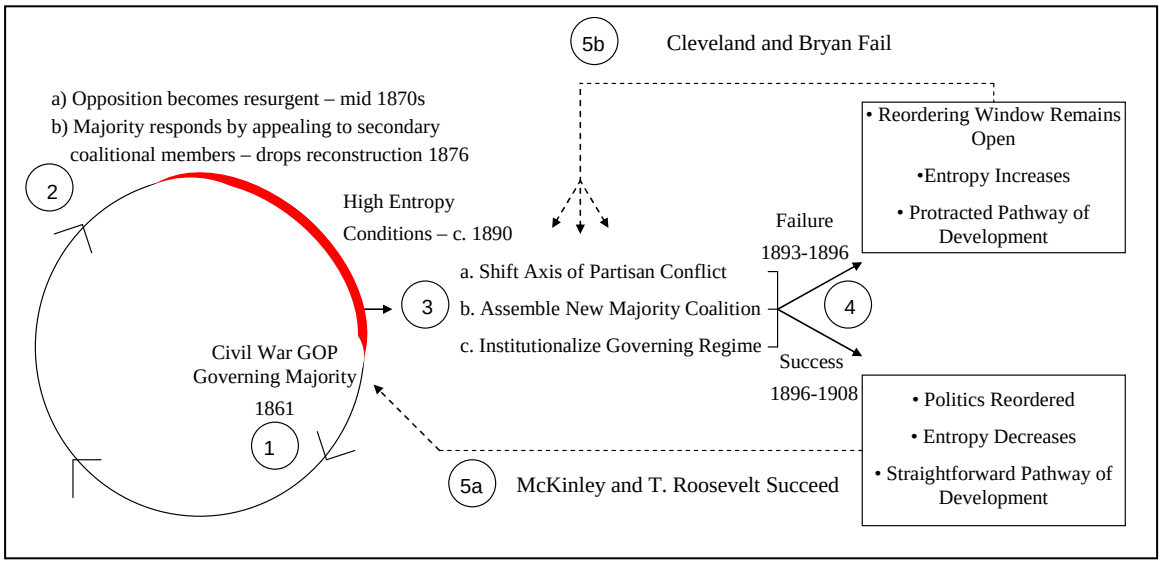
Initial Failure and Protracted Success in the Era of the System of 1896

In this sub-section, I examine a contentious case of new governing majority formation by analyzing the events of the 1890s and 1900s, which is crucial to the establishment of new theory for two reasons. First, a whole host of scholars have argued about whether a "System of 1896" governing majority was established during this time (Key 1955; Schattschneider 1960; Burnham 1970; Sundquist 1983; McCormick 1986; Sibley 1991; Mayhew 2002), and, second, Skowronek agrees with the ney-sayers, a positive finding in this case would represent the sort of unexpected finding against the leading theory that is crucial to my project. I therefore examine the historical record around this period through the prism of my five step flow chart model of the governing cycle. I present evidence that: 1) Cleveland encountered high entropy conditions and then failed to complete each of the tasks necessary to form a new governing majority, and then; 2) Bryan followed with an additional failure, before; 3) McKinley and then T. Roosevelt succeeded. In doing so, I show that this case is consistent with my new theory concerning cases of initial failure followed by protracted pathways to successful

formation of a new governing majority. I then use this analysis, and a matching strategy, to speculate about the Reagan case.

Ample evidence suggests that by the beginning of 1890, American politics had entered a state where high entropy conditions prevailed. Both Skowronek (1993) and Crockett (2002) accept this possibility within the terms of regime theory, but let me discuss the origins of the condition a bit more. By Benjamin Harrison's administration, a Civil War Republican governing majority had been dominant for almost three decades

Figure 5.1
Initial Failure and Protracted Pathways to Success in the "System of 1896"



(event 1, Figure 5.1). This coalition, largely put together to preserve the Union, had long since achieved this goal. By the off-year election of 1872 the Democrats had become resilient enough to capture the House of Representatives, an institution they would control fourteen out of the next eighteen years (event 2). When the Democratic candidate for president, Samuel J. Tilden, won the majority of the popular vote but not the majority

of the electoral vote in 1876, the GOP agreed to withdraw Federal troops from the south and (effectively) abandon reconstruction to win the presidency for Hayes. This vigorous exertion kept the veto holding presidential office in Republican hands,[4] but policy focus shifted to narrowly concentrate on guiding the country through a period of large-scale industrialization, which as Richard Bensel demonstrates, was facilitated by giving each branch of government shepherd duties over a different dimension of this policy (2000).

As expected, while the GOP's shift to other priorities (and sources of energy) in the face of the resurgence of the Democrats was successful in the short term, it began causing cracks to rise within the Republican coalition. Policy drifted and different factions contended with each other over what priorities should be pursued most vigorously. As time went on, new conditions also created increasing awareness of widening capacity gaps. Dissatisfaction with the status quo and the governing regime's inability to deal with problems arising out of rapid industrialization, deflationary agrarian economics, urbanization, and mass immigration then created new conditions (and advocates) that were screaming for reform. This produced a series of third party and protest movements, culminating with the dramatic rise of the People's / Populist Party in the late 1880s.

Into this cauldron of rising entropy, stepped new Republican House Majority Leader, Thomas Reed in 1888, who – despite having the narrowest of a majority (166 seats to 159) – was bound and determined to take advantage of his party's unified control of government, and to advance an aggressive legislative agenda.[5] He did so through the invention of "Reed's Rules," in an episode that is highly instructive of how leaders can

open the perception of a legitimacy gap through reliance on unpersuasive stratagems during times of increased entropy.

Historian Hal Williams describes the following events in colorful detail (1978: 21-53). He explains how late nineteenth century Democrats had perfected a parliamentary maneuver, appropriately named the "disappearing quorum," to stop most legislation in the House of Representatives dead in its tracks. The ploy was simple, once the House convened and a quorum for business had been established, Democrats would refuse to vote on any matter that they did not support. In this way, the minimum number of votes to sustain the quorum was lost and legislation could not even be considered. Essentially, nothing could be accomplished.

After dealing with this well established delaying tactic for nearly two months, Reed became frustrated and, relying only on his own discretion as chair, instituted new rules to overcome the obstacle. On January 29, 1890 he simply directed the clerk to record the names of members present and refusing to vote. In doing so, Reed adopted procedures that would fill the quorum and enable the House to overcome the primary Democratic delaying tactic. Pandemonium ensued, and for days afterward the gallery was filled with spectators and reporters taking in the spectacle of Democrats shouting and denouncing the Speaker as "a tyrant and czar" (Williams 1978: 24).

Had Reed stopped there, he might have won wide support for taking sensible measures to ensure that the people's chamber was doing the work it was sent to do. However, he did not; and over the next few days continued expanding his own powers. In the process he essentially authorized himself not to recognize any parliamentary

measure that he felt was intended for delay or obstruction, and this went a bridge too far down the pathway of using unpersuasive stratagems to advance one's priorities. It convinced the Democrats to immediately begin acting responsibly in repudiating the majority by using the partisan press to urge the people to rise up and protect America's anti-authoritarian creed against the extreme and tyrannical elements controlling the Congress. In doing so, they would accuse Reed of subverting the Constitution and clearing the way for the Republicans to loot the Treasury. The threshold of high entropy conditions had been reached.

Republicans soon began to use Reed's rules to legislate in earnest and, as expected, entropy immediately began to spike. Political crisis ensued after this and the reordering opportunity opened. The details look like this. By October 1890, during one of the most productive sessions in history, the "Billion dollar Congress" had passed a number of major bills, including the Dependent Pensions Act, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, the compromising Sherman Silver Purchase Act, and McKinley's tariff (of abomination) revision. They had also come very close to passing a major civil rights bill, derisively referred to as the "force bill" for attempting to facilitate (black) suffrage by bringing congressional elections under federal control through the use of circuit courts and bipartisan oversight boards. However, the public's response to the Republican's heavy-handed activism was as swift as it was sharp.

Had the Republicans been interested in observing, they would have seen the storm clouds of severe discontent gathering across the entire country as they used the new rules to legislate. That summer, farmers throughout the South and West began converging on

camp grounds and picnic areas by the thousands to socialize, vent mutual grievances, and listen to fiery populists like William Jennings Bryan exhort them to action against the corrupt powers in Washington. By the end of the summer, populist "Alliance" leaders claimed the allegiance of almost 2.5 million voters – nearly a quarter of the electorate. In the south the sense of outrage against the status quo was compounded by the reopening of regional antagonisms, which Republicans had set off via their attempts to revive civil rights issues. Additionally, signs of discontent could be seen in the normally staid Midwest where Republicans at the state level had followed the moralizing zeal of their national leaders. They had done so by pushing prohibition, English language only schools, and Sunday-closing laws on Catholics, German Lutherans, and others members of liturgical faiths whose felt their religion, family, and language were under attack. Finally, a widespread sense of apprehension rose across the land as McKinley's extremely complex tariff bill took shape. Citizens across the country had started to think of themselves as consumers and were worried about what the effect of tariff revision would have on prices of basic goods and commodities in an already shaky economy. The fact that the most popular, sugar tariff lowering, provisions of the bill did not kick in until 1891 and the bill was not signed until October 1890, spelled disaster for legislators as they had little benefit to immediately point to and only one month to explain things before the mid-term election.

Amidst the crisis like high entropy conditions these developments provoked, Republicans suffered a cataclysmic loss in the 1890 midterm election, in which they ceded control of the House (after losing *93 seats)* and lost numerous governorships to the

Democrats.[6] All of this suggests that the political system had indeed reached the high entropy conditions necessary to open the reordering opportunity. Thus the stage was set for the emergence of a transformational leader, one able to form a new governing majority, lower entropy, and usher in a new era of American politics (event 3).

It was within this context that Grover Cleveland proceeded to win the following 1892 presidential election. In this same election Democrats captured control of the Senate, thereby achieving unified control of the federal government for the first time in three decades. This gave Democrats the effective control over veto holding institutions necessary to reorder. Even Skowronek acknowledges that Cleveland, as the leader of a nascent Democratic majority, enjoyed a "reconstructive moment" under these circumstances (1993: 48). I thus assert that, upon his arrival to the presidency, Cleveland assumed the onus of establishing a new governing majority through completion of the three tasks I have outlined (event 3 a, b, c). Unfortunately for the Democrats, Cleveland was probably the wrong man at the right time. He seems to have had neither the desire nor political skills necessary to take advantage of the reordering opportunity. Cleveland's political ineptitude, coupled with the unfortunate coincidence of the Depression of 1893 at the start of his presidency, resulted in a failure to form a new Democratic governing majority during the high entropy early 1890s.

Given the Democrats' substantial intraparty divisions, which lurked immediately below the surface of their 1890 and 1892 victories, completion of the three necessary tasks would have been a remarkable achievement for anyone in Cleveland's position. That completing the tasks would have been difficult does not, however, mean that it

would have been impossible. I contend that, through making different choices than Cleveland did and acting with greater political finesse than Cleveland had, another Democratic president taking office in 1893 could have blamed the depression on the failed policies of his Republican predecessors and taken advantage of the political and economic crises swirling throughout the polity to successfully reorder.

Cleveland's failure to reorder begins with his inability to successfully complete the first of the three necessary tasks: shifting the main axis of conflict (3a).[7] In the elections of 1890 and 1892, an axis of conflict portending an era of Democratic dominance seemed to emerge. Largely motivated by opposition to all things associated with the GOP protectors of the status quo, this axis of conflict was ostensibly tied to the protective tariff and actually linked to broader concerns about federal government support for industrial interests (Knoles 1942; Merrill 1957; Williams 1978). Indeed, through emphasizing his strong support for lowering the tariff, Cleveland managed to unite disparate wings of the Democratic Party to support his 1892 presidential bid. After he became president, however, Cleveland abandoned his focus on the anxiety provoking protective tariff and instead attempted to ideologically reshape the Democratic Party over an issue about which the Democratic Party was starkly divided – repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 (Hollingsworth 1963; Welch 1988). Hence, Cleveland discarded the one issue over which he might have been able to unite a new majority coalition around and shift the axis of conflict to support their priorities and instead focused on an issue over which an enduring Democratic majority had little chance of forming.

While it was certainly true that much of the driving force behind Cleveland's victory over Benjamin Harrison in 1892 was a repudiation of Harrison and the Republicans, not an affirmation of a concrete set of policy proposals promoted by the Democrats – this is not unusual. As was suggested in the case of Jackson, repudiation and not articulation of a clear program is what is normally stressed first by a newly responsible opposition. It is only when confronted with the task of governing that the emphasis switches to the articulation of concrete priorities and the establishment of a more clearly defined axis of conflict. It is therefore within the act of legislating that an emerging majority becomes fully responsible by maturing beyond the rhetoric of repudiation. It is for this reason that I argue that Polsky misses much by overemphasizing focus on discursive analysis in regime building (2003, 2009). Talk is cheap, and reveals less than actions taken when forced to govern.

Indeed, the primacy of anti-status quo discourse masked the fact that the Democrats contested the 1892 election as a party strongly divided on a number of policy issues, most notably the metallic standard (Williams 1978; Knoles 1942). Despite these internal divisions, which must always be expected within mass parties that derive from a two-party system, I do not argue that shifting the axis of conflict requires complete agreement among a partisan coalition on a large set of policy issues. Rather, it entails focusing on one or two policy issues and linking them to a broader, unifying, governing philosophy. My argument with respect to Cleveland is therefore that the protective tariff was indicative of a potential line of cleavage that, even if faint, could certainly have been exploited to maintain a Democratic governing majority. Upon assuming the presidency

in 1893, Cleveland had the opportunity to shift the axis of conflict by focusing on the tariff and linking it to other matters his nascent coalition could support, but he chose not to do so.

McKinley later used the divisive Silver / Gold issue to brand Bryan and the Democrats as radical, but wisely touted a mi-metal solution that allowed him not to undermine his support out West among Republican Silverites. With twenty-twenty hindsight, this appears to be the position Cleveland should have taken. Indeed, if he had, there could have been a Democrat in the White House when the rich Klondike strike of the late 1890s effectively took the wind out of the debate by flooding the market with gold.

Cleveland's emphasis on securing the gold standard, while earning him endearing admiration from bankers, is ultimately vital to understanding why he failed in the second task: assembling a new majority coalition (event 3b). Cleveland's most fundamental mistake in this task relates to the sequencing of his policy objectives (see Pierson 2004). Cleveland could have initially focused on a party-unifying issue like the tariff, raged against the Republicans for causing the Depression of 1893, and then used the intraparty goodwill resulting from these successes in efforts over this issue to lead the party through more contentious matters. Instead, he chose to initially focus on the most explosive intraparty issue he could have hoped to find (and refused to compromise on details related to this issue) thereby immediately alienating crucial coalition members and dividing his party (Williams 1978; Crockett 2002). Such was Cleveland's obstinacy over never compromising on his principles that he both rightly became recognized as the

defender of the status quo and made little to no attempt to satisfy any but the Bourbon faction of his party. He thus continued to alienate fellow Democrats as well as those citizens who had joined the Democratic bandwagon in 1890 and 1892. This resulted in the disastrous midterm election of 1894, which saw the Congress yo-yo back into Republicans hands as the Democrats lost five Senate seats and 113 Congressional districts!

Because Cleveland both lacked the desire to advance coalition uniting policy initiatives and therefore spent almost all of his time as president without a supportive Democratic coalition (and therefore without effective control of Congress, even before Democrats lost it in earnest), he did not even come close to completing the third reordering task – institutionalizing a new governing regime (event 3c). In short, then, because of his staunch adherence to principle, his refusal to compromise for the sake of what he considered his party's long term interests, his overall lack of political skills, and some bad economic timing, Grover Cleveland completely failed to take advantage of the reordering opportunity that was handed to him by history, failing to create a new governing majority (event at branch-point 4).

Cleveland's leading of his party down the path of failure had important consequences. The possibility for a straightforward reordering, tethered as it was to Cleveland's presidency and the possibilities of forming a new centrist majority coalition, had passed. Consequently, entropy continued to increase throughout his presidency and the reordering opportunity did not close at the end of it but rather proceeded via complex pathways (events along 5b). Along these pathways, initiative within the critical juncture

eventually transferred from the nascent Democratic majority coalition established in 1890 - 1892 to a new, and differently augmented, Republican majority coalition. Additionally, this ensured that multiple individuals would have a hand in fulfilling the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority.

The events along these complex pathways began at the 1896 Democratic convention in Chicago. Here, William Jennings Bryan won the Democratic nomination for president and, in the process, dramatically committed to shifting the axis of conflict upon which American politics was based. He did so through his fiery and polemical embrace of the free silver position. This issue explicitly reflected Bryan's dominant political worldview – that corporations had gained too much power at the expense of the "teeming masses" (Sundquist 1983). Thus, Bryan's 1896 campaign was an attempt (like Jackson's before it) to raise the salience of new issues, only this time they reflected a political worldview that saw class conflict as at the core of American politics. Through mobilizing agrarian populists to his cause and alarming eastern industrialists to the threats he posed, Bryan succeeded in accomplishing the first reordering task (3a) by changing the fundamental scope of conflict in American politics and shifting the axis that cleaves the electorate.

Unfortunately for the Democrats (*again*), this new line of cleavage cut across the electorate in a way that made forming a new majority coalition nearly impossible for them. McKinley and his chief advisor Mark Hanna were quick to realize this, and used Bryan's fiery rhetoric to raise incredible amounts of money in defense of more moderate priorities and thus were able to assemble a diverse new majority coalition oriented around

"economic nationalism" and the "advancement of urban-industrial society" (Williams 1978 : 119).[8] In doing so, they outlined a solution to tasks (3a) and (3b), which would allow them to assemble a new Republican majority coalition. Their winning electoral majority was made up – like Jackson's was – of a hodge-podge collection of supporters, which included traditional party stalwarts –like northern business interests– and also members of the urban working class, established farmers, and immigrant ethnic groups (McSeveney 1972; Brady and Stewart 1982; Wanat and Burke 1982; Nardulli 1995), some of whom had been driven out of the Democratic party by Bryan's call for class warfare (Kleppner 1970).

After winning the election in 1896, McKinley was still challenged to secure his nascent majority coalition by completing the third necessary task – institutionalizing a new governing regime. Success in this task would support their policy preferences and political advantage, locking-in their dominance. Even though the Republicans were able to cobble together the outlines of a new majority coalition in the campaign of 1896 (just as the Democrats had in 1892), the cohesion of this new coalition was far from guaranteed. Therefore, establishing this new coalition's priorities via institutional change became paramount. This, however, would prove to be a far more complicated and prolonged task to complete than usual because McKinley was both affiliated with the old Republican majority and did not have much of a legitimacy gap to exploit in justifying his efforts. He would have to make do working within a coalition cross-pressured in regards to addressing capacity gaps while only being able to rally his supporters against

the fading memory of a failed Democratic predecessor (Cleveland) and a radical Democratic alternative (Bryan).

McKinley was simultaneously pushed, by affiliation, to adhere to past Republican policy orthodoxies, like support the tariff, while being driven by high entropy conditions and obvious capacity gaps. These were favored by new coalitional members who were especially anxious to find new solutions – such as the advancement of reciprocity trade agreements (Williams 1978). Under these conditions, it may therefore not be too surprising that McKinley was keen to sidestep contentious domestic issues (other than the tariff) and rather found a way to create a new rallying point for his governing majority via almost immediately steering the nation to war with Spain.

Had McKinley been a Democrat or had Cleveland (or Bryan) been in office when Republicans themselves began to question if the tariff had outlived its usefulness in maturing the American economy (as they began doing so in the late 1890s), institutionalization in this area probably would have proceeded much more smoothly and been more punctuated in character. As it was, McKinley was making his first big stop on a public relations tour pushing for a switch to reciprocity when he was shot in Buffalo, New York. He therefore never got to see how far his administration's victory in the Spanish-American War or his steps towards invention of the "modern presidency" could be used to push through institutional change (Phillips 2003). Though McKinley most probably secured his coalition through War and had began to take the first steps in responding to capacity gaps through institutionalization of new policy approaches, his

assassination precluded the full completion of this third task. Reordering was not complete and development continued to proceed by complex pathways.

The responsibility for completing the third task thus fell into the able hands of McKinley's successor, Theodore Roosevelt. He too was cross pressured in his efforts to institutionalize new approaches to capacity gaps, but succeeded in breaking ranks with the past in significant ways. One example of this was in achieving railroad reform. Railroad regulation was seen by contemporaries as "a moral issue" which prompted fundamental "regime-level debate" (Tulis 1987). Because the issue pitted old guard Republicans owners, against more progressive Midwestern Republicans shippers, the ensuing battle to institutionalize a new governing regime became symbolic of Theodore Roosevelt's greater war to fully lock-in the main axis of conflict in a way that would keep new and old members in the same majority coalition. Sensing that the people would no longer "…tolerate the use of vast power conferred by vast (corporate) wealth… without lodging somewhere in the Government the still higher power of seeing that this power is also used for and not against the interests of the people as a whole," Roosevelt waited until he secured election in his own right and finally used the Hepburn Act to institutionalize a new approach to the relationship between industry and the state (Gould 1991: 152).

In terms of pure policy innovation the passage of this Act was a compromise, giving some (including Skowronek) the impression that Roosevelt failed to beat the conservative elements of his party. Yet I argue that, in terms of responding to a perceived capacity gap and reordering institutional arrangements, it was a watershed

event. This policy was successful because it reinforced a new axis of conflict by legitimizing the many, often uncoordinated, efforts of lower level bureaucrats to bring government outputs into line with new expectations (Carpenter 2001; Peri 1986, 2003). Importantly, it made progressive reform part of what the substantially revised "System of 1896" Republican coalition's politics was about and prevented this faction from permanently bolting the party until 1932. Finally, it demonstrated how inelegant success can be when forming a new governing majority along protracted and complex pathways of development (event 5a).

Theodore Roosevelt acted after Bryan had played the key part in shifting the main axis of conflict and after McKinley was instrumental in assembling a new majority coalition. His completion of the third task was accomplished in a manner that was somewhat different from presidents – like Jackson – who led straightforward successes. I argue that Roosevelt was charged with needing to find a way to respond to capacity gaps by grafting a new set of institutional relationships onto a Republican governing regime that had been shaped by a different GOP coalition in the aftermath of the Civil War. In trying to at least rhetorically recapture the radical roots of the Republican Party; Roosevelt was forced to reorder institutional relationships within the state because the earlier ones were pre-industrial in their outlook and scope. Thus by proposing that the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) be given the power to arbitrate and reset disputed railroad rates, in the Hepburn Act, Roosevelt clearly sided with Midwestern shipping interests and placed the burden of challenging ICC rulings on the rail owners. Thus, Roosevelt sought to exploit an opportunity to reorder institutional relationships

through his railroad regulation initiative, and he did so in order to address capacity gaps and lock-in a new governing philosophy associated with the new axis of conflict that had given the GOP a majority.

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My analysis demonstrates that we should view Cleveland and Bryan as having failed to lead a successful reordering. However, we should also view McKinley and Roosevelt as having succeeded in accomplishing the three necessary tasks to form a new "System of 1896" Republican governing majority (see Table 5.1). In Skowronek's terms, McKinley and Roosevelt are therefore reconstructive presidents. This is more accurate than viewing them as "articulators," or innovators within orthodox parameters, as Skowronek suggests (1993). It is surely true that the force of much of their reordering was blunted by the fact that, as Republicans, they were in many ways hamstrung by their affiliation with the Civil War GOP governing majority. I reiterate that what, in my view, distinguishes a concrete reordering from a nebulous reconstructive episode is evidence of the shifting of the axis of conflict, the assembly of a new majority coalition, and the institutionalization of a new governing regime – all in order to overcome high entropy conditions. Since all of these events happened in the 1890s-1900s, I argue that these two presidents succeeded … but they did so along protracted pathways.

Table 5.1 graphically depicts these events. Here I note that there are multiple chief contributors (row 1) and each of them experienced high entropy conditions (column 2). Although Cleveland worked within a reordering opportunity, he did not complete any of the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority (row 2, columns 3, 4, and

5) and therefore must be judged a failure. Bryan succeeded in shifting the axis of conflict through his nomination securing "Cross of Gold Speech" (row 3, column 3). However, he was not elected and therefore failed in the other two tasks. Overall, Bryan must also be considered a failure. McKinley, taking advantage of Bryan's shift, succeeded in both articulating a governing philosophy on the flip-side of the new axis of conflict, as well as in assembling a new majority coalition. He was then, in my interpretation, only partially successful in institutionalizing a new governing regime. Finally, T. Roosevelt was able to fully lock-in the axis of conflict and new majority coalition through completing the institutionalization task. I thus judge McKinley and Roosevelt as having lead a protracted but successful reordering.

Table 5.1.
Sequence of Events within the Crucial "System of 1896" Case of Protracted Success

Chief Contributors:	*High Entropy Conditions*	*Shift Axis of Conflict*	*Assemble Majority Coalition*	*Institutionalize Governing Regime*	*Final Assessment*
Cleveland	X	No	No	No	Failure
Bryan	X	partial	No	No	Failure
McKinley	X	X	X	partial	Protracted Success
T. Roosevelt	X	X	X	X	

No doubt this era's reordering would have looked very different and been far more distinguishable had Bryan won in 1896 and succeeded in building a new Democratic governing majority. However, both he and Cleveland before him did not respond to the underlying problem of entropy in a way that enabled them to keep the effective control of veto holding institutions required to form a new governing majority and consequently they forfeited the opportunity to others. That it was affiliates of the old Republican governing majority who were able to take advantage of this opening and (however awkwardly and obscurely) complete the three tasks should not preclude us from judging these efforts as successful.

As Capoccia and Kelemen (2007) argue, events occurring within a critical juncture can result in the establishment of an outcome similar to the status quo that existed beforehand. That politics are re-equilibrated to a similar outcome does not mean that no critical juncture has occurred. Therefore, the fact that Republicans re-emerged as the dominant party after 1896 does not mean a reordering failed to occur, in the case of the governing cycle. Nor does it mean that no new governing majority was established at this time (as realignment scholars have long argued within the terms of their theory). As I argue, since all three tasks necessary for new governing majority formation were accomplished during this time period, reordering did *indeed* happen. American politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can therefore be characterized as operating within two back-to-back Republican regimes, one from 1860 to 1896 and the other from 1896 until 1932.

The Other Protracted Case – A New Interpretation of the Reagan Revolution

As I have already made clear, I agree with Skowronek in holding that the New Deal Democratic governing regime came to an end with the Reagan Revolution.[9] This puts me at odds with realignment critics like Ladd (1991) and Mayhew (2002) the first of which whom likened hanging around for the end of the fifth party system to "Waiting for Godot." It does, however, put me in company with those like Petrocik (1981) and Aldrich and Niemi who still argue that just such a realignment took place (1996).

I do, however, interpret the events around this time differently than Skowronek. He relies on a narrow vision to excoriate both Carter's leadership (as disjunctive) and Reagan as a "gross caricature" of the reconstructive stance that amounts to a "subversion" of its normal operations and a "trashing" of its standards of legitimacy (1993: 423). I offer a broader vision of failure and more nuanced reading of success. Instead of focusing on how the thickening institutional field of action and subsequent waning of political time corrupted Reagan's efforts, I suggest that – like in the "System of 1896" case – events of the era can best be understood in terms that account for them being complicated by previous failures to reorder. I thus place Reagan's opportunity to reorder within the context of protracted pathways of development and suggest that a somewhat more rigorous version of the same matching strategy used previously will lend support to this interpretation.

The broad contours of my interpretation are depicted in Table 5.2, which suggests that Reagan's protracted success came after a long sequence of previous failures

Table 5.2.
Sequence of Events in the Reagan Revolution:
A New Interpretation as a Case of Protracted Success

Chief Contributors	*High Entropy Conditions*	*Shift Axis of Conflict*	*Assemble Majority Coalition*	*Institutionalize Governing Regime*	*Final Assessment*
Goldwater	?	partial	No	No	Failure
Johnson	X	X	No	partial	Failure
Nixon / Ford	X	X	No	partial	Failure
Carter	X	X	No	partial	Failure
Reagan	X	X	X	X	Protracted Success

stretching all the way back to the rise of high entropy conditions sometime when Lyndon Johnson was president. As no one until Reagan was able to fully complete the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority, development proceeded along very complex pathways and witnessed a highly protracted (and peculiar) success. Let me examine some of the key points of this interpretation – without overstepping and going into full case study analysis.

I start with my assertion that by sometime in 1964 high entropy conditions were experienced in American politics. This follows from two supporting propositions, one, that all events expected to happen previously already had and, two, that all of the necessary indicators of the phenomenon were present during this time. In support of the

first, I suggest that by 1964 the New Deal Democratic majority had long since succeeded in accomplishing its primary and unifying goal of establishing a welfare state in America, and had actually begun to pursuit coalition shattering secondary aims. This occurred in the wake of the return of Republican resilience, which was demonstrated by their capture of the Congress in the 1946 election and the capture of all three veto holding institutions after the election of 1952. The Democrats responded to this majority ending threat vigorously – and predictably – by seeking out new energy sources through pursuit of secondary coalition aims that, according to Gerring (1998), went so far as to reorient the party ideologically (away from its earlier Populist orientation towards a new Universalist one). Thus, the sequence of events expected to occur before the opening of the reordering opportunity had occurred.

In support of the second proposition, I suggest that by 1964 many of the indicators of high entropy conditions were present. As alluded to above, the long dominant Democratic party was suffering from serious coalitional strains around this time, as a new axis of conflict centering on civil rights legislation and the attainment of "Great Society" initiatives was publically being touted. The move toward this coalitional equilibrium upsetting new line of conflict was made possible by the confluence of three events. First, the "conservative coalition" (of southern Democrats and Republicans), which had stymied much change in the congress since 1939, lost control of enough seats to block legislation in 1961 (Shelley 1983).[10] Second in the sequence, Felix Frankfurter died in 1962 allowing Kennedy to appoint Byron White and give the Warren Court its activist unleashing 5-4 majority (Powe 2000). Finally, Kennedy's 1963 assassination put

Johnson in the White House, where (in deciding not to waste the crisis) he abandoned JFKs tentative approach and went "all in" for political change. These events hit conservative elements (of both parties), like a triple combination to the head, convincing them that liberals were going to use temporary electoral advantage, unpersuasive stratagems (via the Supreme Court), and demagogic manipulation of the bereaving masses to aggressively enact a new agenda. To them, it must have felt like Tom Reed himself was bullying through a new round of activist change. Needless to say, they perceived a legitimacy gap and called for a new champion to lead efforts to "stand astride history yelling stop!"

Liberals, of course, saw these events differently. For them, not only were these efforts consistent with the "universalist" governing philosophy that had been a secondary priority since the New Deal coalition,[11] but these efforts also aimed to overcome capacity gaps that they had identified within the polity, and a legitimacy gap they had identified with the filibuster employing informal "conservative coalition" that had dominated Congress from 1939 to 1961. Indeed, liberals of the day might not have rejected the comparison with Reed at all, for surely they would have understood his frustrations.

Both the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and conservative elements of the Republican party had begun to act responsibly in leading the effort to repudiate some part of the Democratic party by the summer of 1964. The Republican party was divided in its stance towards taking up responsible opposition, and the Democratic party was openly repudiating part of its own populist self. I must stress that in doing so it was not extending first order New Deal coalitional ideals to their logical conclusion, as is often

assumed, but rather, it was breaking with them in pursuit of the secondary priorities of its liberal wing, which were then dominant.[12] The reordering occurring at this time appeared similar to the Jacksonian or System of 1896 reordering, where many elements of the previous governing majority were returned to power in coalition with newer elements that agree to pursue slightly different priorities. Indeed, exchanging some of the white southern vote for the more of the liberal white vote and nearly all of the urban, northern, black vote is probably what Johnson hoped to achieve for his coalition by pursuing Civil Rights. Little did he realize that he was putting in motion forces that quickly raged out of his control.

Into the cauldron of rising entropy, stepped Barry Goldwater, a fiery leader who, like his party's most vocal activists, was interested in responsible repudiation. Goldwater, however, did not join the liberal wing of the Democratic party in repudiate the old "conservative coalition," but rather he offered a new, full-throated conservative vision for the nation – one that repudiated liberalism itself. In taking a fully responsible position, which not only offered repudiation of the status quo but articulated an alternative vision, Goldwater probably overplayed his hand.[13] Yet there is little doubt that he acted as if the high entropy threshold, opening the reordering opportunity, had been reached.

At this stage of research I find it hard to be certain as to whether a reordering opportunity had in fact been reached, and therefore place a question mark in cell (2, 2). In other cases, it is quite clear that high entropy conditions cause the opposition to offer widespread repudiation years before they successfully contest for the presidency.

Goldwater's responsible behavior had somewhat narrow but very intense support within Republican ranks, thus he didn't just repudiate the status quo, he offered a clear (and self-defined extremist) alternative, Goldwater's candidacy was seen as embodying a new – and by many, a dangerous – governing philosophy, and his attempt to shift the main axis of conflict was (like Bryan's attempt) only partially successful. Furthermore, because he lost the election, Goldwater had no chance to complete the other two tasks necessary to form a new governing majority and, in final analysis, his efforts must be judged as a failure (row two, column 6). Development would then proceed by complex pathways.

Even if high entropy conditions hadn't fully been reached before Goldwater won the Republican nomination in July of 1964, this event certainly pushed entropy past the threshold that causes it to spike. Not only was his nominating convention in San Francisco one of the most acrimonious in the history of the Republican party, but by August race riots had broken out in Harlem and Philadelphia and the United States was expanding the to war in Vietnam over the Gulf of Tonkin incident. The smoldering embers of political crisis had begun to catch fire as Johnson won his landslide. I therefore conclude that his second term was served during high entropy conditions (row 3, column 2).[14]

Johnson responded to his lopsided electoral victory just as theory predicts a leader, acting within a reordering opportunity, would. He immediately called for the enactment of his axis of conflict shifting, Great Society vision, articulating a concrete legislative agenda that clearly stressed the new universalist priorities of his nascent majority coalition. Many moderate Republicans, certainly shaken by the scope of their

loss, and probably following their preferences quickly joined LBJ to pass a number of landmark bills, including: the Medicare Act of 1965, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (which fulfilled many of the provisions of the Force Bill of 1889), the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and the Minimum Wage Act of 1966. For all extensive purposes, Johnson must then be given credit for partially institutionalizing a new governing regime (row 3, column 5) and for fully shifting the axis of conflict dividing the nation (row 3, column 3). However, these actions – following in the wake of Goldwater's failure and the complex pathways of development that were entered upon – had very unique consequences. Indeed, they helped to implode Johnson's coalition.

From a standpoint that takes serious the interconnectedness of the first two tasks of my model, it is easy to explain why this happened, and John Petrocik has provided complete empirical support for my argument (1981). While Goldwater's articulation of a new axis of conflict was too extreme and was therefore rejected by the electorate (much like Bryan's was), Johnson's cleaving line was too extreme as well – although this wasn't immediately evident to him. Johnson was mistaken to read the repudiation of Goldwater in 1964 as either the complete rejection of conservatism or as giving him a mandate to cleave the electorate too far along the universalist dimension. His reforms defined a new line of conflict that pleased few. It was quickly seen by the "silent majority" as too liberal, but was not liberal enough for many activists – who, by 1966, were additionally angered about the presence of 400,000 American troops in Vietnam. By 1968, the nation literally seemed afire as race riots broke across the nation and protests disrupted the

Democratic national convention in the wake of the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy.

To borrow Skowronek's term, conditions were disjunctive. Skowronek, of course, holds that Johnson practiced the politics of articulation. He is mistaken, though, because he does not hold that Johnson, while affiliated with the same Democratic party as FDR, fundamentally broke with the governing philosophy of the populist oriented (if still liberal wing lead) New Deal coalition. Skowronek thus views the Great Society shift to a universalist orientation and program as only orthodox-innovation within the parameters of the previous liberal philosophical "commitments." Yet he forgets that the New Deal was also tethered to southern coalitional "interests," whose commitments were abandoned. His writings seem to make a teleological projection of the Great Society's liberalism back into the New Deal's populism, where as a coalitional priority it was undeniably secondary.

These disjunctive, high entropy, conditions set off the slow motion decline of the New Deal coalition, keeping Johnson from succeeding in the second task – assembly of a new majority coalition (row 3, column 4).[15] By the end of his term, Vietnam, race riots, and anti-war demonstrations dominated the news, and it was clear that Johnson had both failed to close capacity gaps and further widened the perception of a legitimacy gap. Entropy had not been addressed through his partial success in institutionalizing a new governing regime, indeed it had risen. He would not run for re-election and his reordering efforts should be judged as failing in final analysis.

The next occupant of the White House, Richard Nixon, thus inherited high entropy conditions, a shifted axis of partisan conflict, a partially institutionalized new governing regime, and a narrow majority coalition that still left Republicans without effective control of Congress. His challenge, as seen from the systemic perspective of a president acting within the context of the reordering opportunity, was then to complete the three tasks necessary for the GOP to form a new governing majority after previous actors had failed. However, because of these failures development had proceeded upon pathways that complicated his efforts. He therefore faced a more complex challenge than usual.

To start with, Nixon might have operated within a reordering opportunity, but even so, he acted without effective control of Congress. This, according to the macro level rules of the legislative games, made institutionalization along new lines practically impossible. Therefore, although he faced systemic conditions that called for reordering, he – like the "opposition" leader in Skowronek's typology – was forced to find third way solutions because he could not bridge the separation of powers gap. He thus attempted to address capacity issues in a way that actually added to the growing Great Society institutional regime. Nixon's need to co-opt and further advance the priorities of his Democratic opponents while giving them a more conservative pale certainly sprung from political necessity – for example like making the EPA an executive agency. However, we must also consider that he pursued the course he did, because, as a moderate within the Republican coalition, he drew strength from his ability to find middle ground and not from championing a unique "program." Nixon therefore did not try and offer a new

conservative governing philosophy to define what those on his side of the Great Society axis of conflict stood for. It seems the "silent majority" was thus silent partially because they did not yet have a leader who could articulate their priorities and unite them behind a program to gain effective control of government.

Instead of nominating a responsible conservative in 1968, Republicans probably convinced themselves to nominate the moderate Richard Nixon, because Goldwater had been a disaster. I suggest that had another moderate like "Mr. Republican" himself, Senator Robert Taft, lived to take the nomination in 1964, rather than Goldwater, and lost narrowly while opposing Democrats with his principled (but program free) style, entropy would have still risen. However, conservatives could have spent the next four years repudiating Johnson, and perhaps more widely convincing Republican elite of the electoral wisdom of their project. Then the electorate might have been ready for a conservative – like Ronald Reagan – as early as 1968. However, a Republican congress still would have been needed to succeed. Most probably, complications from Goldwater's failure contributed to the fact that Republicans did not nominate a responsible repudiator in 1968, during a time that according to systemic context, called for one. It is therefore not surprising that Nixon did not really attempt to complete the three tasks to form a new governing majority, during his first term. Therefore, entropy was not lowered.

The nomination of George McGovern in 1972, made clear to all that the liberal wing had gained control of the Democratic party. As expected of a candidate acting within a reordering opportunity, this Democratic candidate ran a responsible campaign

that clearly articulated a "universalist" vision that aimed to form a new Democratic governing majority by completing the Great Society's unfinished business. However, liberalism was rebuffed when McGovern was crushed at the polls by Nixon.

It is my opinion that the scope and depth of this loss, and the threat it posed to the Great Society project, contributed to the intensity of the liberal hatred of Nixon, which fueled the investigations that brought about "Tricky Dick's" resignation in the face of the Watergate scandal. In arguing this, I suggest that Watergate needs to be viewed through the prism of the governing cycle to be fully understood. As such, the impeachment appears to be part of the vigorous response that is expected by any majority (even a nascent one) after their dominance is threatened by a resurgent opposition. Indeed, this is exactly what I argue explains the animus that fueled Bill Clinton's impeachment some thirty years later – when his election was (rightly) seen as a threat to the Republican governing majority that prompted a vigorous (and over tenacious) response. Regardless of motivations, Watergate ended up discrediting Republicans, further increasing entropy, and ensuring that neither Nixon nor Ford would be able to articulate a clear governing philosophy that would unite a new majority coalition in pursuit of the institutionalization of a new governing regime. Both presidents therefore failed to complete the tasks necessary to form a new governing majority (row 4, column 6).

Jimmy Carter had the next opportunity. Skowronek has detailed the difficulties the "Man from the Plains" experienced during his presidency (1993). I will therefore not go into any detail here to demonstrate this as well. I do note that there can be little doubt that high entropy conditions prevailed during his presidency. I will only remind that I

trace the origins of these conditions all the way back to 1964, and argue that they presented themselves as a "malaise" by Carter's presidency precisely because there had been multiple failures to address them previously. Indeed, it is the legacy of a long train of failures that gave unique shape to Carter's own.

For example, the shifting of the main axis of conflict to a universalist orientation placed him outside the ranks of the now dominant liberal wing of the party. To fully understand Carter's outsider status in 1976 one must get beyond his inexperience and obscurity (never that much of an issue for one famous New Deal Vice President elevated to the presidency or several Supreme Court nominees) and note that as a liberal, civil rights supporting, southerner he probably would NOT have been an outsider when FDR or Truman lead the New Deal coalition. His continuing conflict with liberals over the pragmatic direction he wanted to govern was, to be sure, fueled by Carter's poor track record, but it is not best understood as a function of the New Deal regime weakening (as Skowronek argues: 362). Rather, from a systemic perspective, Carter's struggles were a complicated continuation of the battle to form a new Democratic governing majority.

Due to repeated failure to assemble a new majority coalition and institutionally lock in liberal priorities, Carter's opportunity to reorder along more pragmatic lines actually threatened the more dogmatic priorities that the liberal wing wished to dedicate a governing majority to pursuing. The same dynamic that seems to undermine the "favorite son" presidents that follow reconstructive presidents (Skowronek 1993), then applied to Carter. For true acolytes of the newly articulated universalist governing philosophy, Carter wasn't a pure enough champion. Racking up plenty of "read my lips"

moments, he was often seen as committing heresy when he was forced by expediency to deviate from the liberal wing's vision. To make things worse for liberals, every failure of Carter's threatened the nascent liberal governing majority with being stigmatized as incompetent and thus illegitimate by Republicans. In this context, some liberals could justify Ted Kennedy's bitter struggle to undermine their party's president and seize the nomination from him. It was necessary to save the true faith from corruption. Unsurprisingly, the struggle fatally undermined Carter. It was probably seen by some liberals as a better alternative to keeping an albatross in the White House. But if this was so, it turned out to be a major miscalculation. In final analysis, the internal strife that helped cause Carter to be judged as a failure (row 5, column 6), also caused entropy to further increase to the point where the electorate was then ready for a responsible conservative repudiator to try his hand at reordering.

This interpretation of Carter's failure is slightly different than Skowronek's, which emphasizes that his failure stemmed from his inability to adapt FDRs ideology to new conditions that had revealed their limits. I argue that Carter's pragmatism was not out of step with the New Deal's necessarily "experimental" welfare state building focused populism. It was out of step with the doctrinaire liberalism of the Great Society program, whose rigid universalist orientation, which emphasized expanding programs seemingly no matter the costs or economic conditions, was out of touch with the times (but not out of sync with the dictates of social justice). Carter was thus caught between a rock and several hard places. His coalition expected him to complete a Great Society program that was unsustainable (within its own logic) and was therefore the source of

capacity gaps in the polity, which as president he needed to address. The further he strayed from the liberal wing script, the less legitimate he was in their eyes. So he pursued change leveraging the legitimacy of the neutral expert. However, the more he met grief as "an engineer" who was unable to find a way to finance the welfare state for another generation, the less legitimate he was in the eyes of the opposition. This interpretation puts Carter's tenure within the complex pathways of an unsettled battle to form a new governing majority, allowing Carter's failure to shed light on the unique challenges of his successor.

When Reagan assumed the presidency after successfully repudiating Carter, he inherited much the same high entropy conditions as did his predecessor. He was challenged to address capacity gaps by reforming a bloated, unresponsive, government that was increasingly seen as a drag on the economy and contributing to unusually slow rates of productivity, growth, high inflation and unemployment, ever increasing federal outlays and taxes, and a demoralized national spirit.[16] He was also challenged to close the legitimacy gap that conservatives recognized as pitting a "silent majority" against entrenched liberal elites, whose reliance upon the Supreme Court to further an extremist agenda (as typified in the Roe vs Wade ruling) was seen by many as resort to use of the unpersuasive stratagem.

In facing this particular set of challenges, Reagan's opportunity to reorder is very similar to any president who served during high entropy conditions. However, Skowronek makes the case that Reagan's opportunity was unique in that he had to politically maneuver within the new constraints of the "thickening" welfare state. Layers

of institutions, millions of recipients of federal largesse, and well-organized and powerful special interests groups were ready to mobilize and protect specific programs. Skowronek argues that because of this "thickening," political time is expected to "wane," which explains Reagan's anomalous reconstruction. I however offer an alternative explanation. It incorporates Skowronek's observations within it, but more importantly accounts for Reagan's quantitatively different success in reordering as a function of the complications of a string of previous failures. Let me now examine how past failures complicated the accomplishment of the three reordering tasks.

Before examining how Reagan impacted the axis of conflict, the first dimension, we should look at the events leading to this point. Reagan inherited an axis of conflict that was shifted by Johnson's universalist commitment to the Great Society project and that had never had a corresponding (and opposing) governing philosophy established to define what it meant to be on the other side of the cleavage. Goldwater had attempted to articulate just such a governing philosophy back in 1964, which certainly had influenced the conservative wing of the Republican party. However, his attempt was rough edged and his only partial success probably kept Republican's from honing this message through repudiation of Johnson in the run up to the 1968 election. Nixon's victories further retarded the articulation of a responsible conservative vision, and his impeachment temporarily discredited the Republican brand. However, by the time Carter had become president, the failures of Great Society style "tax and spend" liberalism had become manifest and this provided Reagan a very favorable context in which to articulate

a “kinder, gentler” version of Goldwater’s conservatism (Mellow and Tulis forthcoming).[17]

Reagan’s resultant conservative governing philosophy can in some sense be seen as merely an extension of L. Brent Bozell’s 1960 synthesis of the three primary strands of conservative thought, which he first achieved as ghostwriter of Goldwater’s classic – *The Conscience of a Conservative* (2009). Reagan’s conservatism extolled a civics grounded in moral virtues, anticommunism, and greater discretion for business. This followed from Reagan’s core belief that centrally administered government tended to weaken a free people’s character, and that the “real destroyer of liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations, and benefits” (Scaife 1983: 4-5). Thus, when Reagan announced, in his first inaugural address, that “government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem,” he was articulating a worldview that defined what those on his side of the axis of conflict stood for (Nelson 1999).

Much has been misunderstood in analysis of this statement (and of Reaganism in general) because both liberals and conservatives have failed to see that it is most profitably read as an annunciation of principle rather than as a tactical plan to eliminate government. But, this self-deceptive failure to clarify the point is also understandable given the complex pathway by which this enunciation of priorities was arrived at. Both Republicans and Democrats seem happy to encourage the more radical interpretation as a revisionist “throw back” gesture to the somewhat extremist image Goldwater himself liked to foster. For conservatives it salves old wounds, encouraging them to forget that their movement was once squarely rejected, while encouraging fringe elements to keep

up their energetic support. Meanwhile, it reminded liberals of the glory days when their ascendance seemed to be sanctioned by the people, encouraging them to forget their 1968 implosion and 1972 and 1980 rejections. All-the-while, via exaggeration of the opposing threat, it encourages defense of what they see as the "true" liberal majority's program. Both parties' narratives are distortions of reality, ground in revisionist myth making, that either read away past failures or current shortcomings. Neither encourages honest assessment and both encourage many citizens to stay mislead. This bipartisan strategic obfuscation of reality (and self-deception) was one of the consequences resultant of the many previous failures to do what Reagan finally succeeded in doing (row 6 column 3) – articulating the conservative vision that united a narrow majority on his side of the shifted axis of conflict.

Along the second dimension, Reagan's success in assembling a new majority coalition was also greatly complicated by the sequence of prior failures. Indeed, until the Congress firmly fell into Republican hands in 1994, many would not give Reagan credit for having actually succeeded in this task. To understand how Reagan did in fact succeed along this second dimension during his own time, it is necessary to understand the nature of his complicated coalitional challenge. In essence, Reagan needed to cobble together a new majority from a party system that was undergoing a protracted and two-way realignment.[18]

The difficulty of this task is illustrated in Table 5.3, which depicts the shifting regional base of the Democratic party from 1948 to 2000. While there are limitations on how much can be taken from a comparison of snap-shots like this, if we assume that each

frame is fairly representative of outcomes, the overall picture does reveal some stark trend lines that reinforce my narrative. In it we see evidence that emphasis on secondary coalitional priorities, and adoption of a universalist ideology, between 1948 and 1960 produced gains for the Democrats in the liberal New England and Pacific regions, while having no effect elsewhere. The positive part of this trend continues for Democrats after 1960, however it is counterbalanced by evidence that the open shift to championing Great Society programs caused (by 1980) the gradual decline of Democratic party strength in its southern and border state bastions, as well as its rapid collapse in the Rocky Mountain states). This two way trend continues over the next twenty years, when the GOP finally gained control of the Congress.

Table 5.3
Democratic Party Strength in the Congress as a % of Total Regional Delegation

	South	*Border*	*New England*	*Mid-Atlantic*	*Rockies*	*Pacific*
1948	98	86	39	49	75	36
1960	94	84	50	49	73	51
1980	64	68	64	54	39	56
2000	42	38	77	55	25	62

Source: (Complied from Stanley and Niemi 2003)

South = TX, AR, LA, MS, AL, FL, GA, TN, SC, NC, VA
Border = OK, MO, KY, WV
New England = CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME
Mid-Atlantic = MD, DE, NJ, PA, NY
Rockies = AZ, NM, CO, UT, NV, WY, MT, ID
Pacific = CA, OR, WA, HI, AK

Besides providing general support for my narrative of the era, this table suggests a couple of things about Reagan's success in assembling a new majority coalition and also suggests that we should look elsewhere to complete the picture. The first thing it

suggests about Reagan's task of assembling a new majority coalition is that he was working within a dynamic environment. Both parties were losing and gaining supporters simultaneously, with the Republicans slowing gaining on the Democrats. The second thing the table suggests is that Reagan was working at a time when collapsing one party dominance was still the single greatest impediment to any clear success in assembling a Republican majority coalition. Most probably, had the Southern and Border regions had viable Republican alternatives to vote for, like they did in the Rocky Mountain states, they would have realigned just as rapidly, making the rise of the conservative majority easier to see.

Given the fact that in 1980 the Republican coalition was gaining as well as losing, and was a long way from capturing all the conservative House districts in the South and Border states (that they eventually would), it is easy to lose sight of the fact that what is most important about coalition assembly is its ability to provide effective control over all three veto holding legislative institutions. Effective control is temporarily needed to institutionalize new priorities and advantage, but is not needed to defend these things and lock-in pathways of development. In all previous cases, effective control has occurred under unified government.[19] Yet, it remains possible that under high entropy conditions, a leader could succeed in institutionalizing a new governing regime under divided government. The proof is in the pudding. Thus, it is conceivable that a president, like Reagan, acting after a long train of failures could cobble together an effective majority and succeed in reordering through institutionalization of a new governing regime. In such a scenario, final judgment of success in assembling a new majority would be

dependent upon whether a coalition gains effective control for a partisan group and allows them to lock-in their long term advantage via institutionalization of a new governing regime. If advantage cannot be maintained, institutions can, to some degree, be turned to serve other priorities (as Johnson might attest to).

Along the third dimension, institutionalization of a new governing regime was, perhaps, the most complicated task Republicans faced in 1980. Completion of this task is often the most complex given the persistence of previous institutional forms, the limited transformative powers that can be wielded in a system of separated powers, and the complicated set of objectives that need addressing via the process. This task was especially difficult for Reagan, because not only could Republicans wield very limited effective control over Congresssional veto holding bodies, due to a narrow Senate majority and House of Representatives that the GOP would never control during his presidency, additionally, conservatives faced the unique challenge of confronting a partially complete Great Society institutional regime that had taken root over the past sixteen years of high entropy conditions, developing in directions that many interests were supportive of but that Reaganites were philosophically opposed to.

Given the limitations of his position and the sheer scope the problems of the era, Reagan – like T. Roosevelt before him – would have to focus his efforts on a tactically winnable battle that would never-the-less signal a shift to new priorities and establish path dependencies that would lock-in a new Republican governing majority. While Reagan famously advanced his program through use of a comprehensive "administrative strategy" (Nathan 1975, 1983) and mastery of the politics of "spectacle" (Miroff, 2003),

perhaps his most important legislative accomplishment was winning the "Budget Battle of 1981."[20] In fighting for his budget, Reagan did not just aim at trimming expenditures while nudging up defense spending, as had Republican predecessors like Nixon. He also aimed at a more fundamental reformation of entitlement formulas, the recalibration of regulatory relationships, and significant changes in monetary and tax policy. In short, Reagan aimed to institutionalize the new priorities of his nascent majority.

Coincidentally, a few weeks after submitting his budget, Reagan received a ground swell of popular support when he was shot. With the first crucial vote upcoming on the budget, his team decided to take advantage of this newfound political capital by orchestrating an in-house, carrot and stick, campaign to take the president's agenda to those southern Democrats who Reagan needed to gain effective control over the Congress. Over the Easter break, members of the Republican National Committee and other inside players spread out at the grassroots level and traveled to these members' districts to work up pressure to support the president. Local corporations, campaign contributors, and trade associations were recruited to help the cause. Letter writing campaigns were put together and business interests were asked to place ads in newspapers and magazines supporting the budget. This strategy took advantage of the fact that many southern Democrats had run behind Reagan in their own districts. Equally important was the implicit promise that if southern Democrats supported the president on his budget, they would "receive a pass" during the next mid-term election (Pfiffer 1996: 106).

The culmination of the "Southern Blitz" strategy to gain effective control over all veto holding institutions was Reagan's triumphant return to the spotlight, after his brush with death, in a nationally televised address to a joint session of Congress on April 28, 1981. Having demonstrated his ability and willingness to go over the heads of the Congress to the American people he reminded Congress that he had pledged loyalty to "We the people…" when he set out to save America from its present economic mess. That to fail by not passing his budget would "kindle a wrath (in the people) which burns like a consuming flame" (Reagan 1982: 118).

On May 7, 1981, sixty-three Democrats defected and the administration backed budget package known as "Gramm-Latta" passed the House 253 to 176. By May 14 the House and Senate conference committee agreed to a resolution including reconciliation instructions that would provide $36 billion in budget cuts to the last Carter budget, sought by Reagan. Finally, on June 26th the House voted 232 to 193 in favor of an omnibus reconciliation package that cut $35.1 billion from the budget for FY'82. Reagan had achieved effective control over Congress to pass his regime reordering budget.

There is still considerable debate over whether Reagan's budget cuts represent a victory, or if, as Stockman later put it, "there is less there than meets the eye" (Schick 1982: 33).[21] It is true that even from the beginning most entitlement program spending, representing forty some percent of the budget, were put out of bounds by Reagan. Since national defense and interest payments on the national debt were also largely beyond reach of the budget reductions, much of the savings in FY'82 came from cutting

government operations. Yet, I argue that the real intent of the budget battle was neither to dismantle the welfare state nor to control deficit spending.

Despite Reagan's sometimes blustery rhetoric on these subjects, the real intent and ultimate importance of the budget battle did not lie in these terms. Rather, the 1981 budget must be seen in terms of the larger thrust of Reagan's entire project – as an attempt to institutionalize new priorities that would secure his conservative coalition's advantage for a generation. In these terms, Reagan was wildly successful – as was demonstrated after the Democrats became resurgent in 1992 and found that the majority of Americans supported Reagan's conservative governing philosophy. Because of this, there is much to be said in support of the conclusion that:

> Reagan's battle in 1981 was not really against the federal budget or against the deficit. His target was an active, meddling federal government that got into matters it should not have. (Thus) he would rather have a smaller government with a larger deficit. He would rather have the government spend more as long as it did less domestically. He was not against helping the poor but really believed that they would do better by casting their lot with an expanding economy than with an expanding bureaucracy (Schick 1982: 42).

Whether through intent, or serendipitous design flaw, altering spending priorities generated a massive deficit and slowed the growth of entitlements. This further advanced Reagan's coalitional priorities by limiting the ability of government to regulate business and guaranteeing that government could no longer afford new social welfare initiatives.

Therefore, while growth of government may not have stopped under Reagan its direction and rate of change were dramatically altered via the institutionalization of a new governing regime. This, in conjunction with his supply-side tax cuts and tight monetary policies, resulted in control over inflation, expansive growth of the economy, more jobs, and a successful economic recovery that closed some of the polity's capacity gaps and helped end high entropy conditions. Republicans would then only have to maintain control over one veto holding institution to keep development proceeding upon the pathways Reagan had set it.

So within a little more than one hundred days after taking office, Ronald Reagan succeeded in using a freshly enunciated governing philosophy to define the worldview of those on the conservative side of the axis of conflict, and in helping Republicans gain the effective control over veto holding institutions necessary to institutionalize a new (albeit very hybrid) governing regime. In completing all of these tasks, he succeeded in forming a new governing majority that was dominant for at least the next twenty eight years (row 6). Importantly, this success helped lower systemic entropy and closed the reordering opportunity.

While it cannot be denied that both Reagan's governing regime and his coalition failed to ever live up to or match the conflict defining rhetoric he employed to help him institutionalize the first and assemble the second, I have argued that this incongruence can best be explained as a function of how previous failures to reorder greatly complicated his efforts. Like McKinley and T. Roosevelt before him, Reagan was hardly in the position to uproot previous institutionalizations or make substantial additions.

Therefore, he had to settle for challenging key priorities and recalibrating critical relationships. This resulted in the creation of a hybrid governing regime that was part Great Society underneath and part Reagan Revolution on top. Despite the inherent contradiction within such an arrangement, it successfully provided the polity with the means to address capacity problems of civil rights gaps and neo-liberal market reforms. Both sides of this institutional arrangement therefore received public support. Yet, in having a Janus faced nature like this, the governing regime the Republicans ended up dominating was easily misunderstood by both liberals and conservatives. Each side continued telling themselves fantasies about the past and wrongly assumed that elements championed (and built) by the opposing side were in some sense illegitimate and could be discarded.[22]

Similarly confusing, but understandable within the context of the long train of failures preceding Reagan's presidency, is the nature of the narrow Republican majority coalition. To say that it presents a moving target is, perhaps, to put it mildly. From a realignment perspective a conservative majority did not reveal itself until 1994, when Newt Gingrich led the first GOP capture of the House of Representatives in forty-two years. Yet, Bill Clinton was able to remain popular and win another term in the White House after this, therefore precluding the possibility that a classic "critical election" was realigning the electorate at this time.

Yet, Clinton's turn-about in the aftermath of his healthcare overhaul debacle and quick move to "end welfare as we know it" reveal that there had already been a realignment of sorts. It didn't immediately reveal itself in terms of shifting control of the

House (as it usually does) until Clinton's pursuit of liberal policy preferences and Democratic control of Congress convinced the conservative majority of the electorate that their priorities were under attack. As Skowronek first suggested – and I have attempted to make clear, it was Reagan's election that assembled this majority and institutionally enshrined their worldview as dominant back in 1981. It took Clinton a couple of years to realize this himself, but to his credit he showed great political acumen and dexterity in adapting to this reality. The Republican majority then went so far, after they regained control of Congress, as to find reason to impeach Clinton for threatening their governing majority. This seemed excessive to many. I take no side in that debate here, but I will suggest that the exercise of such power might have been psychologically satisfying to a majority that – because of the course of previous failures – had not been accepted as a majority for over a dozen of years.

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Ultimately, this new interpretaion of both the protracted pathways that development took after 1964 and the complex contours of Reagan's success in forming a new governing majority suggests that repeated failures to reorder impacted outcomes more than Skoworonek's "thickening" of the welfare state did (1993). It is clear that the legacy of previous failures help explain both the disconnect between Reagan's blustery, priority enunciating rhetoric and his far more circumscribed tactical means, and how his unconventional majority was assembled and maintained. My theory also suggests that the incongruence of America's particular institutional environment was – itself – a product of previous failures as well. This is to say that previous failures better account

for the complex successes achieved in the first two tasks within Reagan's protracted reordering, while also acting as an antecedent cause explaining the thickening of the welfare state, which then complicated completion of the third task. Therefore, institutional thickening (I make no claims as to trying to sort out what its independent impact was) it is neither the only factor to consider nor is it most likely the most universally important, in explaining Reagan's protracted reordering success.

While I agree that the institutional field of action that Reagan navigated was somewhat problematic for him, I suggest that the almost feral growth of the welfare state after the mid 1960s is best understood in terms of the failures that allowed it. Had Goldwater rather than Johnson won a landslide in 1964, there is little doubt that much of the Great Society would have never been enacted and there would have been no talk of the waning of political time (or the end of realignment). Indeed, as I've already speculated, had Goldwater not run in 1964 it is possible that either Johnson would not have been so successful in partially institutionalizing a liberal-universalist regime or that Republicans could have won a mandate to retard further growth as early as 1968. Conversely, had Johnson been able to assemble a new majority coalition to support his initiatives, perhaps institutional growth would have proceeded upon a more well managed pathway that would have lowered entropy until it naturally rose again in mid 1990s. Yet, none of these scenarios transpired and institutional growth did undoubtedly cause later difficulties, especially within the third governing regime building task.

The conclusion that previous failures mattered more (in producing anomalous outcomes) than institutional thickness did during Reagan's reordering are buttressed by

comparison with the other case of protracted success. In the "System of 1896" institutional thickening was not diagnosed, making it a condition that is unnecessary for all the difficulties of protracted success to be witnessed. Indeed, in this older case, it appears that previous failure was probably sufficient, in itself, to cause all the difficulties witnessed. Therefore, in the Reagan Revolution case – where the "necessary" condition of previous failure was also present – it is difficult to make the argument that institutional thickening was, by itself, sufficient to cause the difficulties witnessed. Perhaps the best that can be said for institutional thickening is that it further complicated tasks that were already more complex than usual because of previous failures to reorder.

My assertion that previous failures better explain the Reagan Revolution is furthermore supported by the following syllogism: if institutional thickening is sufficient to cause all the problems Reagan witnessed, and the condition does not go away, then all presidents following the "Gipper" would experience the same difficulties. In short, political time would truly wane. Yet, by Skowronek's own admission political time did not, in fact, wane as predicted (2008). Therefore, institutional thickening does not, at this time, appear sufficient to cause the difficulties that I've attributed to the legacy of previous failures.

It does remain very possible that Skowronek was merely premature in his drawing his conclusion. In this case, thickened institutions could, someday, have the impact upon political time that he predicted. Indeed, as I will further discuss in the conclusion, it appears increasingly likely that the failure to reorder that caused the feral growth of the welfare state might have set up conditions that both make failure to reorder more likely in

the future while making further expansion of the welfare state insufficient to secure future growth. However, before I turn to exploring some of these issues, let me move on to the second phase of my research design. Here I use regression analysis to help establish validity and confidence in both the findings of my two case study chapters and generalizability of my theory to all of American political development.

[1] Scholarly debate over the existence or non-existence of a "System of 1896" has raged for many years within the realignment paradigm, with proponents like Key (1955); Schattschneider, (1960); Burnham (1965, 1970); Sunquist (1983); and Kleppner (1986) in defense, and McCormick (1986), Shafer (1991), Sibley (1991), and Mayhew (2002) most prominent in critique. I note that Skowronek's reading of history, in denying that a reconstruction occurred near the turn of the century, comports more closely with the arguments of the second camp.

[2] Again, scholarly debate has raged over the missing realignment of the late 1960s with proponents like Burnham (1970); Petrocik (1981); and Aldrich and Niemi (1996) in defense, and Ladd (1991) and Mayhew (2002) arguing that everyone had, essentially, been "Waiting for Godot." Skowronek actually compromises and falls between these two camps by arguing that, first, while it was not the electorate but Reagan that realigned politics after the New Deal; second, the waning of political time suggests that cyclical dynamics are indeed ending.

[3] In a book review, Polsky has suggested that there were indeed two separate Republican regimes between 1860 and 1932. However, he does not argue that there was a successful reconstruction linking them. Nor does he consider the possibility that there was a Democratic failure to reconstruct during this time frame. For his very thoughtful analysis of this period see: Polsky (2003).

I first made the case that a successful reconstruction occurred during this era in Nichols (2004), I further explored this possibility in Nichols and Franklin (2007) and Nichols and Myers (2008; forthcoming). Much of this chapter is based on research and writing I did for these projects. In all cases, I was the lead author and did more than the lion's share of the work drafting the manuscripts. I cite where my co-authors were especially influential when appropriate.

[4] The Democrats captured the House and Senate in 1878. Had the GOP not cut a deal with the South to keep the Presidency in 1876, the Democrats would have controlled all three veto holding institutions at that time.

[5] It should be noted that the Republican majority in the Senate was only 39 to 37 and that Benjamin Harrison had lost the popular vote to Grover Cleveland by almost 100,000 votes.* Harrison had, however, won handily in the electoral college 233 to 168.

* This makes Grover Cleveland and Andrew Jackson the only presidents to have won the majority of the popular vote three times but only won election twice.

[6] Only the admission of six new western states in 1889-90 stopped the Republicans from losing the Senate in the 1890 election.

[7] In the following analysis of Grover Cleveland's failure, I rely heavily on work drawn from Nichols and Myers (forthcoming). This article contains a condensed version of the Grover Cleveland case from (Nichols and Myers 2008). In this earlier work, my co-author took the lead on researching and writing about events 3a,b,c. I, however, took the lead in producing the condensed version (for the forthcoming version) that this dissertation relies on. Further, I had already posited that Cleveland enjoyed the context to reorder and suggested that he had failed to take advantage of this in Nichols (2004). I take full responsibility for any errors that exist in this section, having revised it and added citations for this project, but would like to thank Adam Myers for his contributions here.

[8] The following analysis of McKinley and T. Roosevelt also draws heavily from Nichols and Myers (forthcoming) and Nichols (2004). I was the lead researcher and author here. I again thank Adam for his assistance in working with me on this, and take full responsibility for any errors that remain in my reworking of this material.

[9] Skowronek writes: "Whatever the limits of Reagan's reconstruction, no president in recent times has so radically altered the terms in which prior governmental commitments are now dealt with or the conditions under which previously established interests are served" (1993: 409-411).

I previously argued that Reagan was a more successful reconstructive president than Skowronek gives him credit for in Nichols (2004). I draw from this analysis here, but did not base my previous work clearly in protracted pathways of development following previous failures.

[10] See also Patterson (1966, 1967) and Moore (1967).

[11] While it may be true that "universalist" aspirations played a large part in motivating the liberal wing of the party to commit to building a welfare state in 1932, it is equally AND MORE IMPORTANTLY true that these aspirations were of secondary priority to the larger coalition… which as Gerring (1998) has demonstrated was ideologically (and primarily) united behind "populist" priorities until at least the 1950s. The primacy of liberalism within the New Deal is a false teleological projection that continues to misshape understanding of how and when this faction became dominant within the Democratic party and what this means for American political development.

[12] The lack of coalitional / philosophical congruence between the New Deal and Great Society eras cannot be denied.

[13] By taking a fully responsible stance, and touting a new market oriented, hawkish, type of conservatism (rather than just conservative delay and isolationism), before the Democrats had repudiated themselves via Vietnam, it appears that Goldwater and Republicans were in error. Had Mr. Republican, Senator Robert Taft, lived to take the nomination in 1964, rather than Mr. Conservative, Senator Barry Goldwater, and lost narrowly while repudiating Democrats with his normally principled (but programless) style, the electorate might have been ready a conservative like Reagan as early as 1968.

[14] Skowronek notes that there wasn't the same wave of popular discontent for Goldwater to ride into office in 1964 as there was for Reagan in 1980 (1993; 362). I do not disagree. Yet he doesn't turn it around to consider whether Johnson interpreted his sweeping victory as a wave for change. He also doesn't stop to consider whether Goldwater's failure either precluded a wave from forming in 1968 or 1972 … or whether his failure precluded the GOP from nominating someone dedicated to riding the wave in those years.

[15] Had the south not been a one party region, haunted by ghosts of the Civil War to the point it prevented most of the former confederate states from having viable Republican alternatives at the local level (to this very day), the slow demise of the New Deal coalition probably would have occurred much faster.

[16] In this section on Reagan I draw from Nichols (2004).

[17] "Kinder gentler" is my term. However, I am indebted to Jeff Tulis and Nicole Mellow for suggesting that one legacy of Goldwater's failure was a better, softer, articulation of conservative principles by Reagan. Indeed, I worked for them as a research assistant conducting preliminary work for their chapter on these events (Mellow and Tulis forthcoming; see also Mellow and Tulis 2007). It is my own spin on events that perhaps a better version of this governing philosophy could have been articulated in the process of repudiating Johnson had a moderate Republican won the nomination in 1964. However, it is possible that the problem was the messenger more than the message and until Goldwater was repudiated and Reagan began to lead conservative forces no "better" articulation was possible. It is also possible, as I suggest here, that having Carter and the economy of the 1970s as a foil was important in how Reagan was able to develop his message.

[18] Like in 1896, Reagan's success was preceded by national unrest that resulted in a sudden 'puncture' of the electoral behavior status quo followed by a quantifiable shift and reestablishment of a new, relatively stable, equilibria. Between 1960-1972, political participation declined by 10%, split-ticket voting doubled, candidate centered elections replaced party machine driven elections, and regional blocks started to realign with the 'solid' south becoming competitive, and the liberal coasts becoming more Democratic (Aldrich and Niemi, 1996).

[19] It is important to note that unified control of government is not equivalent to "effective" control. Without high entropy conditions unified control of government is not sufficient for reordering. Indeed, it appears that Reagan demonstrated that unified control is not absolutely necessary for reordering either.

[20] This account of the Budget Battle of 1981 summarizes my much longer treatment of these events from Nichols (2004). I thank Dan Franklin for his supervision of this project as well as his attempts to help me get a publication out of it (see Nichols and Franklin 2007).

To assure that his Cabinet was on board his administrative strategy bandwagon, Reagan made it clear that all those appointed were to be ideological committed to his agenda (Turner 1988: 40). Reagan summed up his position saying: "Crucial to my strategy of spending control will be the appointment to top government positions of men and women who share my economic philosophy. We will have an administration in which the word from the top isn't lost or hidden in the bureaucracy." (Nathan 1983: 72). On Reagan and the administrative presidency see also Waterman (1989),Wood and Waterman (1991), and Durant (1992).

Bruce Miroff has concluded that the basis of Reagan's success in the politics of spectacle was: "… the character of Ronald Reagan. His previous career in movies and television made him comfortable with and adept at spectacles; he moved easily from one kind to another. Reagan presented to his audience a multifaceted character, funny yet powerful, ordinary yet heroic, individual yet representative. He was a character richer even than Kennedy in mythic resonance" (Miroff 2003: 284). On the rhetorical presidency see Tulis (1987) and Teten (2003).

[21] See also Stockman (1986).

[22] As of October 2009, this confusion seems to persist. Indeed, it appears that the best reading of the current capacity question is: what comes after the neo-liberal welfare state when both statism and loosely governed capitalism seem to have reveled their limits? This is a far cry from either the current Obama administration's apparent focus on completing the 1964 project or the Republicans' apparent focus on furthering the 1980 project.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Analysis

"…the play's the thing. Wherin I'll catch the conscience of the king." ~ Hamlet

In this chapter I execute the second phase of my mixed-methods research design. I conduct Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis of presidential rankings to provide additional confidence that my case study analysis and matching case interpretations were are valid. This analysis then buttresses my governing cycle theory's claim to being generalizable across all of American political history from 1789 to today. It also allows me to add new insight on the impact that context and agency have on expert evaluation of presidential success, which leads to discussion of several ways in which my new theory is superior to Skowronek's. The use of quantitative techniques in this chapter reinforces the strength of my theoretical claims while demonstrating the power of a multi-method research design.

All of this is made possible by using governing cycle theory to operationalize a regression model that predicts presidential ranking scores. The key variable in this model is the one that I construct for *entropy*. With it, I assign a penalty to each president that encountered this condition and a bonus to each president who overcame it via successful reordering. My regression model also contains four other control variables. They are designed to account for other contextual factors structuring presidential rankings and were arrived at through application of a stepwise reduction strategy. In this analysis I find that *entropy* is both a statistically and substantively significant predictor of the presidential ranking *final score*. This test lends support to the theoretical links that I am

trying to make connecting the major tides of political development with a constitutionally induced pattern of entropy and renewal.

As a final part of my analysis in this chapter, I test whether or not my theory is better than Skowronek's is at predicting presidential rankings. I do so by operationalizing a second regression model (with the same four control variables) that has a different key variable assigning a penalty to disjunctive presidents and a bonus to reconstructive ones. I find that this variable is also a significant predictor. However, this model does not account for as much variance within the rankings as does the first model (as is shown by comparing adjusted r^2 scores).[1] This provides some weak evidence of my model's superiority. I conclude this chapter by also discussing whether it may be more theoretically appropriate to apply my theory to predicting presidential rankings than it is to apply Skowronek's in this way. If so, it can be argued that my theory has superior utility.

Before I discuss this regression analysis and lay out my findings, I provide further discussion about my approach. Here I start by focusing on my dependent variable – presidential ranking *total score*. I defend my logic for selecting this measure, discussing its virtues and limitations. I explain how it is derived through survey of historians and other professional observers of the presidency, and then discuss some of its descriptive statistics. I move on to discuss my independent variables, including those which are designed to operationalize my cyclical theory. Here I explain the process by which these variables were selected and coded, as well as review their descriptive

statistics. This initial set up not only provides confidence in the validity of my analysis, but provides the background information that is necessary for my concluding discussion.

Finding a Measure of Analysis

The first major huddle to overcome in executing quantitative analysis designed to test a cyclical theory of American political development is finding a measure to analyze that is both theoretically appropriate and for which comparable data is available from 1789 to today. As I've suggested, realignment theory at first flourished and then foundered upon its solution to the problem of finding an appropriate measure of analysis, ie: electoral returns. They become available generally in the nineteenth century and seem to be appropriate for analysis. However, in many cases (and for some authors especially: see Shafer 1991; Mayhew 2002), this data eventually proved to be less clearly supportive of key claims than original theory suggested. Furthermore, I've argued that the excessive attention given to mass electoral behavior caused realignment scholarship to become too closely (and narrowly) focused on the critical election element of the theory, rather than maintaining its more promising systemic orientation (Nichols 2009). Because of this electoral fixation, when a critical election did not happen – as predicted – in the 1960s or 1970s, critics of realignment gained an upper hand in debates.

Despite this cautionary tale, warning me of the inappropriateness of using electoral returns for this chapter's test, options remain limited as to an available and appropriate measure to test cyclical theories of development upon. Indeed, there appears to be no other measure of mass political behavior that is available (throughout the whole

course of history) to use in this research.[2] This leaves three categories of measure to consider: aggregate electoral outcomes, governing outputs, and modern assessments.

Data on aggregate electoral outcomes, like the partisan control over governing institutions represented in Chart 1.1, is available. However, this data would be inappropriate to use in this case because this measure would then share the same referent as governing cycle theory, creating fatal endogenity problems.[3] Data on governing outputs would be more appropriate on this count. Indeed, researchers, like Clubb, Flanigan, and Zingale (1980) suggested this some time ago. However, measures within this category almost never stretch across two centuries of time with the continuity or conceptual coherence necessary to make them useful or valid. For example, as Aldrich and Neimi have shown (1996), it is possible to use governing outputs to come up with a measure of party system change for just one single era of protracted realignment, but their twenty-three term composite measure of change would not transport to any other time frame than the last quarter of the twentieth century. Therefore, while it may not be theoretically impossible to come up with some sort of an appropriate governing output measure that applies to the majority of American history, I must leave it to future research to tackle this thorny problem. Instead, I explore how expert assessments can be leveraged to come up with appropriate measures. I then discuss one particular modern assessment that is both available and, arguably, appropriate to be used as a measure by which to evaluate competing cyclical theories.

Expert assessments provide measures that are often reliable and replicable, if less precise than some other common methods based on counting – like using roll call votes

to derive NOMINATE scores. These assessments do, however, have the advantage of being derived exogenously from the political pattern / institution / behavior being studied, and are used extensively in some areas of research that suffer availability and appropriateness problems as well. For example, expert assessments are relied upon heavily in the Public Law study of judicial behavior, where editorial writers' perceptions of Supreme Court nominees are used to derive the key measure of each Justices' partisan attitude (Segal and Cover 1989; Segal and Spaeth 1993, 2002).

The particular expert assessment that is used in this chapter is the C-SPAN 2009 Historians Presidential Leadership Survey (henceforth referred to as the C-SPAN survey), in which 64 "historians or professional observers of the presidency" were asked to evaluate presidents along ten dimensions of measure. This poll is, of course, the latest iteration of the presidential ranking survey Arthur Schlesinger Sr. started back in 1948 (see Pfiffner 2000 for results). There are particular drawbacks to this "small n" instrument,[4] but its problems may be overstated and mitigated against, while its virtues are underappreciated. Therefore, I argue that the C-SPAN survey is appropriate, and use my governing theory to try and predict its *total score* measure.

Drawbacks and Possible Problems

Some have argued that presidential ranking polls hold little more than entertainment value for political junkies (Dean 2001; also see Bose and Landis 2003). According to critics like these, three general problems plague these polls and undermine confidence in their validity (Pfiffner 2003). I consider each in turn. The first problem is

the Justice Potter –"I'll know it when I see it"– subjective standard of evaluation. While this is certainly a source of concern, results of these surveys appear remarkably reliable over the years, especially at the top of the rankings where Lincoln, Washington, and Franklin Roosevelt, have always been considered "great" and Jefferson, Jackson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Wilson have consistently been rated just below this trio. There has been similar continuity over time at the bottom of the list, with Pierce, Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, and Harding always being evaluated as failures.

It is in the midrange that there has been some volatility. Here lie the Van Burens, Hayes, and Tafts of history. However, even in this middle group, perceptions of overly subjective evaluation standards may be exaggerated by the famous instances where modern Republican presidents received initially harsh evaluations that brought complaints of liberal bias from conservative quarters. In these cases, presidents Eisenhower and Reagan were later reevaluated and big jumps their ratings confirmed their success. However, this issue is better thought of as possible bias in the survey sample, which can be tested for after controlling for context, rather than a problem of subjective evaluation. Therefore, there appears to be much less to the charge of problematic evaluation standards than op-ed writers would have us believe. Indeed, while experts may disagree if Ford or Carter was a worse president, they consistently agree that both did a below average job, and this suggests that these somewhat imprecise survey instruments are as accurate as the op-ed evaluations of Supreme Court nominees that are routinely used in the study of judicial behavior.

As is suggested above, the second criticism of presidential ranking surveys is the persistent possibility of liberal bias in the expert survey sample. While it is both true that Republicans like Eisenhower and Reagan have suffered from initially harsh evaluations, and modern Democrats like Clinton have seemed to have initially done very well, some have argued that the volatility of early rankings can be attributed to how difficult it is to evaluate contemporary presidents (Pfiffner 2000: 29). One could also argue that liberal presidents are usually more activist in orientation and may more easily catch an evaluator's eye through accomplishing or attempting to accomplish a greater quantity of things. On this count, detractors could, however, counter. They might argue that it is very possible for liberal experts to give credit for effort (rather than accomplishment) when that effort advances objectives liberals themselves support.[5]

In any case, by 2000 the Federalist Society and Wall Street Journal had begun attempts to correct for this possible bias by including more conservative evaluators in their survey's sample of experts (see Taranto and Leo 2004). However, the results of their poll do not significantly differ from most other surveys (including the C-SPAN survey). Additionally, when the liberal / conservative orientation of evaluators was asked of experts in the Murry-Blessing Presidential Ranking Survey of 1982, the same ten presidents were rated as the best (in slightly different order) by members of both groups (see Murray and Blessing 1994). Furthermore, they agreed on five out of six of the worst presidents as well. Therefore, while there may indeed be some degree of initial bias in favor of liberal presidents, some of the preference for activists may reflect actual presidential success, and may get corrected over time. Finally, the design I use in my

analysis allows me to further comment on which presidents appear to be under and over rated given context, shining additional light on this topic.

The third problem is the instrument's inability to control for differing historical context.[6] This is the same problem that Skowronek identifies as undermining comparative presidential biography and advocates of viewing the presidency in terms of eras more generally (1993: 3-17). It is probably no small coincidence that the three most commonly agreed upon "greatest" presidents have lead Americans through their three greatest wars. Nor is it controversial to suggest that some presidents could have been rated higher had they faced greater emergencies. All this being true does not create a problem for my research however. Indeed, *my analysis in this chapter is based on my theoretical assumption that there is a cyclical pattern of differing context that impacts the presidency,* and I test if my conception of *entropy* structures this pattern while controlling for other contextual and individual determinates of presidential ranking.

Underappreciated Virtues

Notwithstanding these somewhat overstated problems, and despite the scant use of presidential rankings in peer reviewed journals (however see: Schlesinger 1997; Feltzenberg 1997; Skidmore 2001; Pfiffer 2003), I conclude that expert polls, like the C-SPAN survey, are appropriate for research like mine. Indeed, I argue that it is a mistake for political scientists to use reasonable validity issues as an excuse to (almost) completely ignore presidential ranking surveys. Political journalism publishing houses, and hence the public, do not take these surveys lightly (Bailey 1966; Murphy 1985;

Murray and Blessing 1994; Ridings and McIver 1997; Faber and Faber 2000; Skidmore 2004; Taranto 2004), and, apparently, as John F. Kennedy once commented, neither do presidents themselves. [7]

Theoretically, it should not surprise that presidential rankings provide a good proving ground for a constitutionally grounded cyclical theory of development like mine. As Hamilton relates in Federalist #72, the very structure of the U.S. Constitution suggests that the office was designed to leverage leading individuals' concern for their legacy or "the love of fame…" this was expected to "prompt (them) to plan and undertake extensive and arduous enterprises for the public benefit" (Rossiter 1961: 437). Therefore, while it may be impossible to determine exactly how much "love of fame" impacts any individual presidential decision, there are clear signs that presidents often do act with an eye towards how history will remember them.

In fact, every 20th century president has seen, and attempted to win, reelection (or election in their own right) as a direct way of bolstering their legacy.[8] In this way, many decisions – great and small – are indirectly "electorally connected" to the fame seeking ruling passion of presidents (Mayhew 1974). Even after the ratification of the 22nd Amendment limited service to two terms, lame duck presidents have often demonstrated a fierce desire to protect and further establish their legacies. It therefore does not surprise us to find a more successful president, like Reagan, with a still unfinished agenda, choosing to become passive as their time in office neared its end. This caution can be interpreted as not wishing to do harm to an established reputation by pushing one's luck. Neither does it surprise to see a marginal president, like Clinton, becoming manic in late

attempts at great accomplishments. This desperation can be interpreted as wanting to prove oneself before time ran out. Finally, it isn't news that some ex-presidents (usually servers of single terms and those with sullied reputations) chose to do good works after office to rehabilitate their presidential reputations.[9]

The desire to establish and shape legacy has such potential to effect presidential behavior that it would be strange if this persistent impulse were to fail to regularly interact with – and leave a record of – the larger cyclical currents that my theory predicts the presidency is periodically be swept up within. Indeed, if presidents are caught up in governing cycles while be motivated out of a "love of fame" to perform for an audience of historians, it may be entirely appropriate to use how this crowd rates their performance to explain presidential action upon the stage. Furthermore, such analysis may inform us as to the limits of their agency. Therefore, political scientists may be uniquely qualified to perform the role of dramaturge in this production, keeping a critical eye upon the presidential actor, the cycles they may be caught within, and their expert audience – all the while exploring their interconnections for deeper awareness.'

This draws attention back to my central difference with Skowronek. I view cycles as systemic in origins and see presidents as deeply embedded actors merely playing a key role in responding to the system-wide problem of entropy. Skowronek views political cycles as an outgrowth of disruptive presidential agency that embeds presidents in context primarily of their own making – at least until the recent thickening of the welfare state. In my view, since the American political system is structured to periodically lapse into crisis, it needs presidents that can periodically lead the response to this problem.

Those presidents that helped bring about (or could not successfully respond to) the high entropy conditions that ignite political crisis should be penalized in assessment of greatness, while those that respond successfully to this condition should get "greatness" credit for revitalizing the system when it mattered most. It isn't as clear how appropriate Skowronek's theory is to use in drawing a similar conclusion, therefore, I wait and discuss this topic at the end of this chapter.

Beyond theoretical appropriateness, a huge general advantage of using a presidential ranking poll in this phase of my research design is the availability of data it supplies. This is no mean accomplishment as I have discussed previously. The C-SPAN survey is particularly good in this sense as it is the first to evaluate all 42 men,[10] from George Washington to George W. Bush, who have completed their term as president.

A particular advantage of the C-SPAN survey, itself, is its design. The survey attempts to mitigate against earlier surveys subjective evaluation standards and control for context, and it provides a way of gaining insight into the possibility of liberal bias. It does these things by requiring experts to evaluate presidents along ten different dimensions of analysis and scoring each from 0 – 100 (see Table 6.1).[11] This adds rigor to the process and (potentially) precision to the instrument as, theoretically, it allows for greater nuance and within case variance. Furthermore, the fact that one of the dimensions presidents are evaluated upon is their: "performance within the context of the times," demonstrates effort has been made to control for contex.[12] Finally, in evaluating presidents upon a dimension that measures their "pursuit of justice for all," the survey

instrument unintentionally provides me with a way to gain further insight into the persistent question of bias.

DV: Total Score from the C-SPAN 2009 Presidential Leadership Survey

The actual measure that is used as the dependent variable (DV) in my regression analysis is the C-SPAN survey's reported "total score" for each president. This total score is arrived at through summation of the scores received along the ten different dimensions of evaluation.[13] It is, therefore, a continuous variable with a possible value of 0 – 1000 points. The higher score represents the higher degree of success. The maximum value assessed in the C-SPAN survey was that of Abraham Lincoln; his total score was 902. The minimum value assessed was James Buchanan's total score of 227.2. The mean total score was 529.6. All 42 presidents' total scores are listed in Table 6.1. There are no surprises in the C-SPAN survey as to who is amongst the presidents with the highest total scores. The trio of Lincoln, Washington, and Franklin Roosevelt dominate, while the cast of usual suspects in the "almost great" / "above average" categories follow. Indeed, the last time C-SPAN conducted a similar survey in 2000, the same fourteen presidents (some in slightly different order) were at the top. At the successful end of the spectrum one of the more interesting things revealed by having a more nuanced total score indicator is the degree to which Lincoln dominates the rest of the field. He is nearly a full 50 points ahead of his closest competitor, George Washington, and is a full 200 points of JFK the sixth rated president. By way of comparison, the competition is

Table 6.1
Results of the C-SPAN 2009
Historians Presidential Ranking Survey

Rank	President	Total Score	2000 Survey Rank
1	Abraham Lincoln	902.0	1
2	George Washington	854.5	3
3	Franklin Roosevelt	836.6	2
4	Theodore Roosevelt	780.9	4
5	Harry Truman	707.7	5
6	John Kennedy	701.1	8
7	Thomas Jefferson	698.0	7
8	Dwight Eisenhower	688.6	9
9	Woodrow Wilson	682.9	6
10	Ronald Reagan	671.4	11
11	Lyndon Johnson	641.4	10
12	James Polk	606.3	12
13	Andrew Jackson	605.9	13
14	James Monroe	605.3	14
15	Bill Clinton	604.7	21
16	William McKinley	599.3	15
17	John Adams	544.9	16
18	George H.W. Bush	542.3	20
19	John Quincy Adams	541.7	19
20	James Madison	535.7	18
21	Grover Cleveland	523.3	17
22	Gerald Ford	509.3	23
23	Ulysses Grant	490.0	33
24	Howard Taft	485.0	24
25	Jimmy Carter	473.8	22
26	Calvin Coolidge	469.3	27
27	Richard Nixon	450.1	25
28	James Garfield	444.6	29
29	Zachary Taylor	442.4	28
30	Benjamin Harrison	442.4	31
31	Martin Van Buren	434.8	30
32	Chester Arthur	420.0	32
33	Rutherford Hayes	409.4	26
34	Herbert Hoover	388.8	34
35	John Tyler	371.8	36
36	George W. Bush	362.2	NA
37	Millard Fillmore	350.9	35
38	Warren Harding	326.9	38
39	William Harrison	323.8	37
40	Franklin Pierce	287.2	39
41	Andrew Johnson	257.5	40
42	James Buchanan	227.3	41

much closer between the fifth through tenth ranked presidents, as only 36.3 points separate Truman from Reagan.

The bottom of the list reveals one result that might qualify as a bit of a shocker and one new addition that probably doesn't astonish many. Otherwise, it is as unremarkable and as stable as the top of the list, with Harding, Pierce, Andrew Johnson, and Buchanan (in descending order) holding down the bottom spots. Only the somewhat unexpected rise of Ulysses S. Grant, who was second to last in Schlesinger's 1948 survey and has almost never risen out of the bottom quartile of any major poll, breaks continuity with the bottom ten in the C-SPAN 2000 poll.[14] The West Point graduate has seemingly been replaced in the rouges' gallery by Rutherford B. Hayes, whose stock has dropped almost as much as Grant's has risen. George W. Bush has also made his debut after his full two terms. He enters at the bottom of the list, coming in just below Tyler and one above Fillmore at 36th overall. As unwelcoming this news may be to "43," speculation as to the possibility that he would go down as the worst president in history seems to have been exaggerated, as he is almost a full 135 points above "Old Buck" Buchanan and will probably benefit some from reevaluation – after emotions have cooled. This demonstrates, once again but to a lesser degree, that there isn't very much competition for the extreme spot on either end of the continuum. This sort of detail doesn't show up in polls that don't use a continuous level measure and merely call for presidents to be ranked categorically or discretely.

Specifying Independent Variables and Operationalizing Theory

As an extension of correlation analysis, the name of the game in quantitative regression analysis is to use independent variables (IVs) to explain variance in a dependent variable of interest. Essential to this process is identifying these IV determinates and specifying the best causal model possible. Observation and theory guide this first process while quantitative step-wise reduction techniques guide the later. For my research, the key step in these processes is the operationalization of my governing cycle theory. The term operationalization itself refers to the means by which causal theories are transformed into data point indicators that can be used as independent variables in my regression analysis. Opperationalizing my theory gives me a way to gauge the confidence we should have in my case analysis and allows me to test if my theory is generalizable. Let me go into some detail as to how I operationalize all of my explanatory variables.

Common sense and the literature on presidential success suggests some factors that might structure presidential total score (Neustadt 1960, Burns 1978, Greenstein 2000a, 2000b; Lord 2003). For instance, because of the path dependent importance of precedent setters and the evolution of institutional powers within the office, both the founding generation and the modern presidents might be expected to fair better than the middle clerkship era presidents. The importance of commander-in-chief powers might boost the scores of wartime presidents and those that served in the bi-polar superpower years. Evidence of contemporary validation of success, via winning reelection to office, might boost the total score of multi-term presidents. Conversely, due to lack of time to

accomplish things, those presidents that have died in office might be expected to be penalized, as well as those that have those that followed them. However, suffering an assassination that turns one into a hero might have the opposite effect. Presidents that had impeachment proceedings brought against them should be expected to be hurt by this. Activist presidents might, as I noted earlier, get higher scores. It might also be the case that presidents who govern with unified governments also accomplish more (see however, Mayhew 1991). There also might be a pattern linking the onset or endurance of economic downturns to lower presidential rankings.[15] Finally, presidents who succeed in overcoming entropy by forming a new governing majority would be expected to do better than those whom either helped bring upon or failed to reorder, during high entropy conditions.

Most of these concepts can be conceived of in "either / or" terms (or a set of related either / or terms). They can therefore be measured with a dichotomous variable or, when it seems appropriate, to aggregate concepts into one measure, a discrete one. As such, dichotomous variables are created to measure: *founding*, *modern*, *wartime, bi-polar superpower,* and *activist* presidents. Discrete variables are created to measure: the impact of *death*, *multi-terms* of service, governing with *unified* Congresses, and both the context of the governing cycle (*entropy*). A summary of these variables is found in Table 6.2.

The dichotomous variables are coded as follows. The *founders* are presidents Washington through John Quincy Adams. The later Adams gets in via family name connections and as the last affiliate of the Democratic-Republican caucus system. Thus, there are six presidents coded as associated with the founding and thirty-six that are not.

Next, while there is plenty of contention when (and if) the modern presidency began (see: Neustadt 1960; Tulis 1986; Nichols 1994), I code the *modern* presidents as all twelve presidents from FDR forward. Throughout history there have been eleven *wartime* and thirty-one peacetime presidents.[16] I coded all of the cold war commander-in-chiefs (up to George H.W. Bush), as well as Franklin Roosevelt as *bi-polar superpower* presidents.[17] I counted every twentieth century Democrat as well as Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln as an *activist* president. However, I was not able to use this as an explanatory variable in my final specification because it was so highly correlated with the "Pursued Justice for All" measure that went into the construction of the dependent variable.[18] It was dropped from consideration because of obvious endogeneity concerns.[19]

Table 6.2
Summary of Explanatory Variable Coding Results

Explanatory Variable	Coding Results
founder	36 = 0; 6 = 1
modern	30 = 0; 12 = 1
wartime	31 = 0; 11 = 1
bi-polar superpower	32 = 0; 10 = 1
activist	33 = 0; 9 = 1
death	2 = -1; 0 = -.5; 24 = 0; 9 = .5; 7 = 1
multi-term	22 = 0; 19 =1; 1=2
unified government	9 = 0; 3 = 1; 9 = 2; 4 = 3; 17 = 4
entropy	11 = -1; 1 = -.5; 22 = 0; 0 =.5; 8 = 1

The coding of the discrete variable *death* is based upon the following logic. The impact of death (or resignation) must normally be thought to impact a presidency negatively by cutting short time to prove oneself. There are two notable exceptions to

this rule that apply to JFK and Lincoln, whose death's by assassination seemed to have rather cut great potential short. Vice-presidents whom have assumed the presidency after the death or resignation of a penalized president offer suffer similarly shortened times in office, but at least get to end them more on their own terms. They must therefore be thought to be moderately penalized, but perhaps not as greatly as their predecessors. Those presidents whom were impeached but not forced from office perhaps suffered a similar moderate penalty.

Taking all this together, I produce a five point *death* variable that discretely ranges from -1 to 1. The six presidents who did not gloriously die in office as well as the one who resigned receive the maximum penalty (1). The seven presidents that followed in their wake and the two that were impeached receive a half penalty (.5). The two presidents whom, like Adonis figures were taken too soon, receive a death bonus (-1). The twenty four presidents who neither died, resigned, were impeached, or followed a president that received a penalty for dying end up scoring a zero (0). No one received half a bonus (-.5).

Another independent variable, is the a three point *term* variable that discretely ranges from 0 to 2. The twenty-two single term presidents score a zero (0), the nineteen presidents who served any part of more than one term receive scores of one (1), and FDR is coded as a two (2).[20] A five point *unified* government variable, which discretely ranges from 0 to 4, is created. Those nine presidents whom never experience a single Congress unified with their administration scored a zero (0). Three presidents had 1 out of 4 Congresses unified with them and received a one (1). Nine presidents had half their

Congresses unified with them and scored a two (2). Four presidents had 3 out of 4 Congresses unified with them and received a three (3). Finally, seventeen presidents served their entire term with unified Congresses they were coded as getting a four (4).

To operationalize my governing cycle theory, I was forced by the anomalous way in which Grover Cleveland was rated in the C-SPAN survey to use a five point scale in my measure of *entropy*. For ease of comparison and interpretation, I made this scale range from -1 to 1. Ultimately, this resulted in eleven presidents being given the maximum penalty (coded as a -1) for their involvement in generating or not addressing conditions of high entropy. Eight presidents were given the maximum bonus (coded as a 1) for their work in ending high entropy conditions through the formation of new governing majorities. Twenty-two presidents were involved in neither circumstance and recieved a score of zero (0). Grover Cleveland, whose two non-congruent presidencies should each be coded differently for this measure,[21] was given a half penalty (-.5) because he received only one combined score in the C-SPAN survey. No one received a half bonus (.5), although consideration was given to coding the formers of the new "System of 1896" governing majority in this way.

Drawing from chapter four and five's case study analysis and matching interpretations, I conclude that John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Pierce, Buchanan, William Harrison, Hoover, Lyndon Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and George W. Bush should be given this penalty. This, in effect, adds Harrison, Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Bush to Skowronek's list of disjunctive presidents and clarifies Buchanan's place by noting that if high entropy conditions started under Pierce they would not have gone

away until politics was reordered. In my mind, the clarification on Buchanan and Bush are not particularly controversial.[22] For the others, I have already provided argument in my case study chapters as to why I both charge Harrison and Lyndon Johnson through Carter with either driving the polity into a high entropy condition or failing to reorder within it.

On the other end of the spectrum, I code Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Reagan as presidents who succeeded in reordering; they are coded with a (1). This adds Washington, McKinley, and Teddy Roosevelt to a list that Skowronek clearly wanted them kept off, while clarifying Reagan's spot.[23] I have already provided argument supporting all these judgments, but let me expand upon Washington's case just a little.

Skowronek starts his book with John Adam's disjunction and argues that "*the power to recreate order hinges on the authority to repudiate it*" (1993: 27, italics in original). It then follows in Skowronek's telling that since Washington didn't have a partisan regime to reconstruct against, he isn't to be evaluated in terms of holding reconstructive warrants. However, having a theory that fails to account for the one "indispensible man" of the era is something that many historians might think disqualifies political time theory from use in ranking debates. There are two other possible solutions to this coding issue for me: Washington could be dropped from the analysis or he could be considered an anomalous "articulator" (in Skowronek's terms) and neither dropped or considered a reordering president but rather given the score of zero (0).[24] I chose neither of these options because the historians are right and it would be a mistake to drop one of

the most important presidents, and because Skowronek has, for over fifteen years, steadfastly refused to stretch his own concept.

All of these historical coding decisions are tested through the upcoming regression analysis, which independently tests their validity and the strength of my theory. This expands upon the historical analysis part of my research design, which only gives evidence that my theory provides insight into: 1) the systemic origins of the cyclical phenomenon – by tracing it back to constitutional roots; 2) the sequence of events that leads to the onset of high entropy conditions; 3) the dynamics of reordering success – including the three tasks necessary to form a new governing majority; and, 4) the answer to what happens if leaders fail to reorder and development proceeds along complex pathways. The mixed methods approach, then suggests whether I've: a) gotten the Jacksonian and "System of 1896" cases right; b) laid valid claim to explaining Skowronek's other cases; c) provided insightful new interpretations of Washington and Reagan's efforts; d) not missed other cases; and, e) therefore accounted for the entire pattern of partisan control of governing institutions in the historical record.

If the *entropy* independent variable is not statistically or substantively significant in structuring the presidential *total score* dependent variable, this suggests that my case study chapters are not valid or my underlying theory is wrong. Support for the generalizability of governing cycle theory to all of American political development would then not be provided despite any innovations in theory or historical interpretation. This would draw into question the centrality I have assigned new governing majority formation within American politics and would undermine *the larger connection that I am*

trying to draw, linking major tides of political development with a constitutionally induced pattern of entropy and renewal. Conversely, however, demonstrating that the governing cycle does significantly explain presidential rankings suggests that all of these theoretical links are both intact and therefore sturdily connected. Furthermore, after demonstrating this, if I am able to show that my theory explains more variance than Skowronek's theory does (if modeled similarily), I would provide some evidence that my theory is superior. Whether this evidence is convincing or not – given our theoretical differences – is subject to debate, but before I take this on let me next turn to specifying my model and reporting results.

Model Specification

So far, I have shown that care has been taken in both finding appropriate measures and determinates. Argument has been made that the C-SPAN survey is appropriate and that it minimizes measurement error of the dependent variable through its design. The process through which explanatory variables are identified and operationalized have also been detailed. This next brief section explains the step-wise reduction technique used to eliminate independent variables from consideration and to build the final model specification necessary for analysis. Although much of this section could be left to a methods annex, I chose to report it here – in more detail – due to the nature of this project.

First, let me acknowledge the drawbacks and defend my choice to use a stepwise reduction technique in specifying my model. This technique has been roundly criticized

in the past as mere "data dredging" or intense computation often used as an inadequate substitute for subject area expertise (Johnson, Joslyn, and Reynolds 2001). This general charge against stepwise reduction rings hollow against its use in this dissertation, however. In this project, the stepwise technique is not used in exploratory analysis of thinly theorized or poorly understood relationships, but rather used to validate and confirm findings while being deeply embedded within a mixed methods research design that has already established subject area expertise. Furthermore, while there are other highly technical, but valid, critiques of the technique (see Rencher and Pun 1980; Wilkinson and Dalall 1981), there are also technical reasons to support the choice as well. These include the need to limit the number of independent variables (IV) within any specification that has a small number of observations. Here a rule of thumb is using no more than one IV per 10 observations, and the C-SPAN survey only has forty-two presidential observations to work with. Since I am also interested in running a head to head test between two models latter in this chapter, the logical and objective stepwise approach to specification design may be superior to a more subjective technique as well. Therefore, in this first-cut analysis, I chose to use a stepwise reduction technique to help me select the variables to include in my regression analysis.

The overall goal in any attempt to specify an explanatory model is to come closest to what an observer once called, "God's model," or the one that accounts for all variance and explains everything.[25] Under normal circumstances this, of course, is an impossible standard to achieve, so stepwise reduction is merely used as a technique to systematically include as many of the strongest statistically significant predictors in my final

specification as possible. The first step is to use OLS analysis to regress each IV separately on the DV to determine how much variance (measured by the adjusted r^2 score) each independently accounts for. This allows me to rank order the IVs according to how much predictive strength each individually possesses (see Table 6.3). Starting from strongest to weakest, I then go through the list and cumulatively keep any variable in the specification that both is statistically significant (at the .05 level) and that does not cause any stronger variable to become statistically insignificant through its addition.

Table 6.3
Results of Stepwise Reduction

Explanatory Variable	*Individual Adjusted r^2*	*Result in Stepwise Reduction*
multi-term	.42	Significant / Kept
entropy	.33	Significant / Kept
activist	.30	Endogenous / Dropped
war	.10	Insignificant / Dropped
unified government	.09	Insignificant / Dropped
bi-polar superpower	.08	Significant / Kept
death	.07	Significant / Kept
modern	.05	Insignificant/ Dropped
founder	.04	Significant / Kept

To build the specification for the model designed to test governing cycle theory, I start with the discrete variable *multi-term*. It sits atop the individual variance strength list with an individual adjusted r^2 of .42. Since, it is a statistically significant predictor of *total score*, I keep it in the final specification. Then, I add *entropy* (individual adj r^2 = .33) to the growing specification and check statistical significance. Both IV's are

statistically significant, so I keep both of them in the final specification and see what happens by adding *wartime* (individual adj $r^2 = .10$) to the specification. However, in conjunction with *multi-term* and *entropy*, w*artime* is not a statistically significant predictor of *final score*, so I drop it from consideration and keep going through the rest of the list. In the process, I add *bi-polar superpower*, *died*, and *founder* to the final specification and drop *unified government* and *modern* as explanatory variables. My final specification thus takes the form:

$$Y_{i(\textit{total score})} = B_0 + B_{1(\textit{multi-term})} + B_{2(\textit{entropy})} + B_{3(\textit{bi-polar superpower})} + B_{4(\textit{death})} + B_{5(\textit{founder})} + E_i$$

I note that the inclusion of five independent variables in this model is probably the most that is appropriate for analysis of a small (n = 42) dataset.

Results

I now present the OLS regression results for the model that I have just specified, which includes the variable *entropy* that tests whether my governing cycle theory predicts presidential total score. The results from this analysis reveals that *entropy* is statistically and substantively significant in this model, which provides support for my case study analysis and evidence about the generalizability of my theory to all of American political development (see Table 6.4).

As is to be expected from the method of construction, all five variables in the model are statistically significant, with all but *founder* being significant at the highest .001 level. This, importantly, demonstrates that *entropy* is a statistically significant

predictor of the *total score* even after controlling for the influence of other factors, and thus provides evidence in support of both my previous case analysis and overall theory.

Table 6.4
Ordinary Least Squares Results for
the Determinates of Presidential Total Score

Governing Cycle Theory Model	
Multi-Term	104 (29.43)***
Entropy	110 (23.12)***
Bi-polar Superpower	125 (34.16)***
Death	-102 (29.36)***
Founder	94 (40.80)*
Constant	466 (22.26)***
Observations	42
Adjusted r^2	**.72**

* = p < .05; ** = p < .01; *** = p ≤ .001

Further investigation reveals that *death* is the only IV that has a negative sign. However, it must be remembered that, due to coding, both this variable and the *entropy* variable can produce penalties and bonuses. Otherwise, *multi-term*, *bi-polar superpower*, and *founder* only provide bonuses.

In OLS analysis the magnitude of these penalties and bonuses are directly comparable. So, for example, the impact of being a multi-term president adds 104 points, while the impact of dying or resigning subtracts 102 points from the *total score*. The substantively largest bonus a president can receive is 125 points for being in the White House during the 1944 – 1989 era of bi-polar superpower conflict, while the smallest

bonus, of 94 points, goes to the founders. The impact of the *entropy* variable is also substantively significant, adding 110 points to the total score of those presidents that confronted it, and subtracting 110 points from those presidents that either helped bring the condition about or could not deal with it and failed to form a new governing majority. In this analysis the constant is the y intercept point for the regression line and thus represents the base starting point for all presidents. Therefore, a president that is coded with zeros across all five measures in the model, like James Polk, would then end up with a final score of 466 points. Finally, the model fit statistic or adjusted r^2 score, which explains how much total variance the model predicts, is a very healthy .72.

Discussion

As, hopefully, has been made clear through the set up of the above regression analysis, the purpose of this chapter has been to use quantitative analysis to test if the variable *entropy* is a significant predictor of presidential ranking *total score*. This provides supporting evidence that the findings of my case study chapters are correct and my governing cycle theory is generalizable to the rest of American political development. Now that I have accomplished this goal, I use this section draw out further implications of my analysis. I address the first part of this discussion to presidential studies, and the second part to American political development scholarship. In a third and final part I discuss how regression analysis provides some evidence that my governing cycle theory is superior to Skowronek's political time theory as well.

For Presidential Studies

The relative ease with which I was able to construct an explanatory model, accounting for nearly three quarters of variance of presidential ranking total scores (adjusted $r^2 = .72$), provides evidence that the greatest criticism against the use of historians ranking surveys in presidential studies may be exaggerated. The much feared, "I know it when I see it" evaluation standard may be somewhat subjective, but it is certainly used with enough precision to reach predictable conclusions. Analysis reveals that there are, indeed, five historical and contextual factors that political science can show constantly structure the presidential ranking total scores of the C-SPAN survey. It is therefore, not a secret why some presidents outscore others.

In fact, the model predicts that a president, like Franklin Roosevelt, who was elected to more than two terms, formed an new governing majority, served as commander-in-chief of a bi-polar superpower, and died in office should receive a total score of 807 points. This is only 29 points less than the experts themselves gave him (see Table 6.4 for all the predicted total scores). Meanwhile, the model predicts that a single term president, that was not a founder or a bi-polar superpower commander-in-chief, who nevertheless served during high entropy conditions, like Pierce did, should receive a total score of 357 – putting him at the bottom of the predicted score list, right near where the experts placed him.

This shows that with just five, rather blunt, measures of information it isn't difficult, overall, to predict presidential total scores. Therefore, the C-SPAN survey evaluates with some precision. Since it isn't the accuracy of the instrument's findings

that really undermine its credibility, but rather the imprecise manner which it was thought to arrive at its conclusions that caused so much alarm, my findings should help allay concerns over this question and add confidence that historians didn't come up with their results arbitrarily. Ultimately then, I argue that social science should admit that the methods used by the C-SPAN survey meet the same sort of minimum standards for use in empirical work that other expert assessment derived measures do, like Cover and Segal scores for Supreme Court nominees (1989).

This is not to say that my findings suggest that either the instrument or the predictive model is perfect. Further analysis of Table 6.5 reveals that there are several cases of large discrepancies existing between the models prediction of presidential total score and the actual results of the C-SPAN survey. This predicted / assessed gap is calculated and displayed in column Delta of Table 6.5. All Delta scores are in points relative to what is predicted by the model when the actual historical factors each president confronted are plugged back into the model. Positive scores indicate presidents who did better than predicted, while negative scores indicate presidents who were not assessed as highly as would be predicted.

Without in-depth analysis that is beyond the scope of this project, it is difficult to say exactly how troublesome these gaps are. Some difference between the two scores must be expected when using a model whose predictors are all dichotomous or discrete measures and thus unable to produce much nuance in predicting a continuous level *total score*. Common sense also suggests that gaps must be expected for there to be any room for agency to play out. Some presidents simply might have *over* or *under achieved* while

in office (*OA* or *UA*; in the suspected cause column). There are, however, two other possible explanations for the gaps revealed in column Delta. First, I could have made an error, either by omitting a significant variable from the specification, constructing an explanatory variable incorrectly, or by coding incorrectly. I shall refer to this as *researcher error* (*RE*). Second, evaluators could have made *measurement errors* (*ME*), perhaps due to liberal bias. Analyzing the top ten gaps at both ends of the scale (shaded gray and yellow respectively) thus provides a way to gain original insight into these matters.

First, it does seem that there were a number of presidents that might have over and under achieved. Amongst those highlighted, it appears that both John and his son John Quincy Adams exceeded expectations of serving during high entropy conditions.

Additionally, T. Roosevelt exceeded expectations in the wake of McKinley's assassination. Washington and Lincoln exceeded their context as builders of new governing majorities. Polk, especially (for one term of service), and Wilson also exceeded the context of serving in "normal times" the most. There are suspected underachievers as well. Jefferson, Jackson, and Reagan all appear to have not lived up to the full potential of their entropy ending opportunities, while Pierce, Buchanan, and George W. Bush seem to have exceptionally underperformed during high entropy conditions. Madison and Andrew Johnson appear to have been the biggest under achievers in "normal times."

Table 6.5: Comparative Results: Predicted Total Scores vs the C-SPAN Survey And Suspected Causes of Discrepancies

President	Predicted Total Score	Rank	C-SPAN Total Score	Rank	Delta	Suspected Cause (RE; ME; OA/UA)
Washington	774	4	854.5	2	80.5	RE or OA
J Adams	450	28	544.9	17	94.9	ME and OA
Jefferson	774	4	698	7	-76	ME
Madison	664	9	535.7	20	-128.3	UA
Monroe	664	9	605.3	14	-58.7	ME
JQ Adams	450	28	541.7	19	91.7	ME and OA
Jackson	680	8	605.9	13	-74.1	ME
Van Buren	466	23	434.8	31	-31.2	
WH Harrison	364	35	323.8	39	-40.2	
Tyler	415	31	371.8	35	-43.2	
Polk	466	23	606.3	12	140.3	OA
Taylor	364	35	442.4	29	78.4	
Fillmore	415	31	350.9	37	-64.1	ME or UA
Pierce	356	39	287.2	40	-68.8	UA
Buchanan	356	39	227.3	42	-128.7	UA
Lincoln	782	3	902	1	120	ME and OA
A Johnson	415	31	257.5	41	-157.5	ME and UA
Grant	570	16	490	23	-80	
Hayes	466	23	409.4	33	-56.6	
Garfield	364	35	444.6	28	80.6	RE
Arthur	415	31	420	32	5	
Cleveland	515	20	523.3	21	8.3	
B Harrison	356	39	442.4	29	86.4	RE or ME
McKinley	578	15	599.3	16	21.3	
T Roosevelt	629	12	780.9	4	151.9	RE and OA
Taft	466	23	485	24	19	
Wilson	570	16	682.9	9	112.9	ME and OA
Harding	364	35	326.9	38	-37.1	
Coolidge	519	18	469.3	26	-49.7	
Hoover	356	39	388.8	34	32.8	
FD Roosevelt	807	1	836.6	3	29.6	
Truman	644	11	707.7	5	63.7	
Eisenhower	695	6	688.6	8	-6.4	
Kennedy	693	7	701.1	6	8.1	
LB Johnson	585	14	641.4	11	56.4	
Nixon	483	21	450.1	27	-32.9	
Ford	430	30	509.3	22	79.3	
Carter	481	22	473.8	25	-7.2	
Reagan	805	2	671.4	10	-133.6	ME and UA
GHW Bush	591	13	542.3	18	-48.7	
Clinton	519	18	604.7	15	85.7	ME
GW Bush	460	27	362.2	36	-97.8	ME
mean	529.0		529.6			
std deviation	141.0		162.9			

While all of this expected / assessed gap analysis is speculative and must be judged with the utmost caution, it does suggest that the C-SPAN survey has, despite its best efforts, not overcome the problem of lack of ability to control for context. Indeed, the contextual measure that was used in the C-SPAN survey – "performance within the context of the times" – is highly correlated with *total score* at an amazing .99 level. This probably means that the measure was most likely misused by experts to summarize each president's accomplishment, as it is the best overall predictor of final score out of the ten dimensions measured. It therefore adds almost no evaluative nuance.

In light of my evidence, which shows that it wasn't just successful presidents that over achieved and it just wasn't failed presidents that failed to live up to the possibilities that context afforded them, it appears that the C-SPAN survey's measure of context is completely atheoretical and therefore is of little use. Until historians begin thinking of context in terms that allow for comparison of presidents across shared historical challenges (rather than just in the context of the exact time they served) it doesn't appear that presidential surveys will be able to systematically account for difference in conditions. Therefore, one way governing cycle theory is important to presidential studies is in how it provides a comparative framework with which to view and judge presidential success within context of the challenge of entropy.

A new way of thinking about and ranking the "greatest presidents" emerges from this analysis. Indeed, if part of what presidential ranking surveys are trying to get at is a comparative assessment of great leadership, context must be controlled for in some way to really get at relative success given the circumstances. Governing cycle theory provides

a way to do this, by controlling for context and then ranking presidents on their over and under achievement given what they were working with. This is exactly what I have done in column Delta of Table 6.4. Under these guidelines T. Roosevelt was the greatest over achieving president, followed by Polk, Lincoln, and then Wilson. Conversely, Andrew Johnson is the most under achieving president followed by Reagan, Buchanan and Madison.

Of the twenty presidents I have flagged for brief consideration, it seems possible that six of them suggest that researcher errors (RE) may be at least partially responsible for the predicted / actual gap. In the first case, Washington's status as very first president might earn him some sort of bonus. Failure to incorporate this bonus into Washington's founder measure might, by itself, explain his gap.[26] Similarly, Lincoln may deserve some sort of bonus, perhaps for his role in launching a "Constitutional Moment" (Ackerman 1991). William Harrison's gap suggests that he might only deserve to be coded as only half responsible for bringing about high entropy conditions. Finally, refinements in the way a penalty is given to both those that died in office and those who served after a presidential death may help address Garfield, Fillmore, and Teddy Roosevelt's gaps. Additional thought needs to be given to refining coding before it is used further in presidential studies.

My impressionistic analysis also suggests that measurement error on the part of historians may contribute to multiple gaps. This error does seem to systematically favor the progressive presidents of history. Evidence from column Delta shows that, amongst the presidents up to Andrew Jackson, there appears to be a pattern of relative over

evaluation of the more progressive minded members of the Adams family along with a pattern of relative under evaluation of both the slave owning members of the Virginia dynasty and the relatively illiberal Andrew Jackson. This pattern of bias seems to hold for the most recent times as well, with conservative presidents like Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush both being amongst the most relatively under evaluated and progressive Bill Clinton being amongst the most relatively over rated. Unsurprisingly, Andrew Johnson – the only non-progressive to be impeached – was the single most relatively under rated president while energetic "never quite progressive" Theodore Roosevelt was the single most relatively over rated.

Again, while this analysis is speculative and these conclusions are tentative, it does suggest that the C-SPAN survey has not overcome the problem of controlling for liberal bias. Indeed, none of the top ten underachievers were scored as having higher than average scores on the "Pursued Justice for All" measure while eight of ten of the overachievers, excluding Polk and Wilson, had higher than average scores on this measure. Unless we are willing to believe that agreement in eighteen out of twenty cases suggests no more than mere coincidence, we must conclude that evidence of bias is found in the fact that no matter historical circumstance progressive presidents never fail badly to live up to potential while simultaneously being most likely to exceed their context by the most. This suggests that bias may not reveal itself most clearly in analysis of total scores, but rather in terms relative to exceeding and failing within context. Here, again, governing cycle theory finds an application within presidential studies. In the future, the

"Pursued Justice for All" measure probably should be used as a control variable (IV) rather than as a component part of the *total score*.[27]

For APD Studies

What does it mean that governing cycle theory is generalizable to APD research? Most importantly, it suggests that the theoretical links that I have drawn between constitutional structure, increasing entropy, and new governing majority formation have held and therefore appear to be strong. Repeatedly, throughout American political history, separation of powers has interacted with a two party system to produce stable eras of partisan dominance over governing institutions. These have repeatedly led the political system towards a high entropy condition over time. At some point, political elites from the opposition party take advantage of rising entropy to begin acting responsibly in repudiating the governing majority. This causes entropy to pass a historically contingent threshold that sets off political crisis and opens the reordering opportunity for elites to lead in creating the new governing majorities that respond to unaddressed capacity and legitimacy gaps and reenergize the polity. Regression analysis has shown that those presidents that have succeeding in addressing high entropy conditions through new governing majority formation have been rewarded for this by historians in the C-SPAN survey – even without historians realizing it in these terms. Conversely, those presidents that have been unlucky or unskilled enough to avoid being involved in bringing about high entropy conditions and those that have failed to deal with

the condition have been penalized. Results show that presidents that have been involved in neither circumstance have not been rewarded or penalized.

While this analysis demonstrates that there are other factors that structure the presidential ranking *total score,* the fact that my theory is generalizable suggests that I my application of governing cycle theory accurately accounts for all of the periods of entropy and new governing majority formation that have occurred in American political history. This reinforces my claim that my theory is applicable to all the typical cases that Skowronek accounts for in his research, and extends this set to include Washington's straightforward reordering success. It also suggests that my theory is correct and it is possible to fail to form a new governing majority. Therefore my case study analysis of the "System of 1896" is valid and I was right to apply this finding to the "Great Society / Reagan Revolution" case as well. Finally, the regression results support my interpretation of Washington as the (perhaps unintentional) founder of the first governing majority. Indeed, the first president's role in institutionalizing his (dare I call them partisan?) preferences are more influential than I initially coded them.

Head to Head Test

This third, and final, part of my discussion section focuses on how quantitative analysis can provide some evidence of the superiority of my governing regime cycle over Skowronek's political time theory. To demonstrate this involves, first, creating a second explanatory model, which opperationalizes his theory via substitution of the variable *reconstruction* for the *entropy* variable. The next step is to run the two models in a kind

of "head to head" competition and compare results. When I do this, I determine that the *reconstruction* variable is also statistically and substantively significant. However, the total amount of variance explained by this model (as is indicated by the adjusted r^2 score) decreases in comparison with the governing cycle model. This finding provides some support for the argument that my theory is superior by giving evidence that it is a better predictor of presidential rankings. However, unlike with my theory, there remains question as to whether Skowronek's theory should be used to predict presidential rankings at all. This suggests that governing cycle theory might be considered to have superior utility.

To operationalize political time theory I apply a similar bonus / penalty strategy to coding that I used with *entropy*. This means I assign a penalty of (-1) to those presidents that Skowronek contends were disjunctive and a bonus of (1) to those presidents that he contends were reconstructive. This ends up producing a three point discrete measure of *reconstruction* that ranges from -1 to 1. In extending Skowronek's analysis through the end of George W. Bush's presidency and coding the disjunctive and reconstructive presidents, I attempt to maintain a balance between taking Skowronek at his word (even though my theory suggests he may be wrong in some places) and giving him his best reading (when it is consistent with his theory). This results in there being five reconstructive presidents given the score of one (1), and seven disjunctive presidents receiving a score of negative one (-1), all others score a zero (0). My list adds Buchanan and George W. Bush to his disjunctive list and gives Reagan the benefit of the doubt for being a successful reconstructor.

To build another specification to account for Skowronek's political time theory I repeated the stepwise reduction process but test for the significance of the variable *reconstruction* (individual adjusted $r^2 = .27$). The results of this process produce a specification that is identical to the previous one, except for the fact that the *reconstruction* variable has been substituted for the *entropy* variable. It looks like this:

$$Yi_{(total\ score)} = B0 + B1_{(multi\text{-}term)} + B2_{(reconstruction)} + B3_{(bi\text{-}polar\ superpower)} + B4_{(death)} + B5_{(founder)} + Ei$$

The results of this model (#2) are presented in column 2 of Table 6.6. To facilitate the head to head comparison, I also reprint the results of my earlier findings as Model #1.

Comparative analysis reveals that the second model is similar in many regards to the first. All five IVs are statistically significant predictors of *total score*. However, only *multi-term* is significant at the .001 level of confidence in the second model. This suggests that there is a higher, yet still acceptable, degree of uncertainty about the relationships that exists between most of the other explanatory variables in this model and variation in the dependent variable. However, the direction and relative magnitude of these relationships is similar to those in the first model. Thus, it bears noting that being a *reconstructive* president adds 99 points to *total score* in the second model, while being a disjunctive president subtracts this many points. Finally, the average score for presidents in model #2 is 458 points.

The final results of the head to head contest between these two models can be gleaned through a reference to their adjusted r^2 scores. This is a measure of "model fit," which describes how much of the total variance in the dependent variable is explained by the particular model. In normal circumstances, like this, this measure ranges between 0

and 1. A 1.00 score on this measure would represent a model that explains one hundred percent of the total variance. Therefore, the higher this indicator reads the better predictor the model is. Since the first model's adjusted r^2 (of .72) is .09 higher than the second model's adjusted r^2 (of .63), it accounts for fourteen percent more variance ((.72 - .63) / .63 = .143). This then provides some empirical evidence that governing cycle theory is superior to political time theory.

Table 6.6
Ordinary Least Squares Results for
The Governing Cycle and Political Time Models of Presidential Total Score

Model #1: Governing Cycle Theory		Model #2: Political Time Theory	
Multi-Term	104 (29.43)***	Multi-Term	126 (33.48)***
Entropy	110 (23.12)***	*Reconstruction*	99 (33.43)**
Bi-polar Superpower	125 (34.16)***	Bi-polar Superpower	85 (38.08)*
Death	-102 (29.36)***	Death	-97 (33.62)**
Founder	94 (40.80)*	Founder	104 (47.27)*
Constant	466 (22.26)***	Constant	458 (25.69)***
Observations	42	Observations	42
Adjusted r^2	**.72**	*Adjusted* r^2	**.63**

* = p < .05; ** = p < .01; *** = p ≤ .001

I do not, however, wish to oversell this finding. It certainly would have been more conclusive to find that the *reconstruction* variable was not statistically or substantively significant while the *entropy* variable was. However, because both key variables were significant in each of the models there was no knock out achieved by either side in this contest. Indeed, to keep the fighting metaphor going, governing cycle's higher adjusted r^2 score may be thought of as no better than winning a narrow split

decision. Yet, as a counterfactual, had comparison revealed that the governing cycle model got a lower adjusted r^2 score this would have certainly been counted as a belt retaining victory for the political time model. Therefore, in final analysis, since governing cycle theory came into the contest against the reigning world champion of cyclical theories as an underdog, I argue that a narrow quantitative win should still be counted as a win for my theory.

The higher adjusted r^2 of model #1 reinforces, however slightly, my earlier conclusion that my case studies and matching interpretations were correct. When tested against a theory that does not agree with three of the case interpretations I provide in the earlier chapters, governing theory is show to provide more explanatory power. Since the construction of the contesting models and key variables were identical in almost all other ways, the added inferential power must be coming from the better historical coding that my theory suggests. Thus, Washington does provide an additional case of straightforward success, while the "System of 1896" and "Reagan Revolution" cases are better thought of as examples of protracted successes that witnessed high entropy conditions and reordering failures. It then appears that what elevates my theory over Skowronek's in this contest, is its ability to better handle the tough cases.

Ultimately, this suggests that my conception of periodically rising entropy is superior to Skowronek's conception of order shattering presidents in helping us to understand the macro patterns of American political development. In these terms, it also suggests that my articulation of the dynamics of new governing majority formation, which captures both the concrete tasks necessary for success and provides for the

possibility of failure, is superior to Skowronek's, never clearly specified, and abstract model of reconstruction. All of this indirectly suggests that I have more accurately traced the roots of the cycles of American political development back to their constitutional mainsprings. Taken all together, this provides some further confidence that the grand narrative that guides American politics is one of decay and renewal.

One last issue to consider, is whether or not it is even appropriate to assume that Skowronek's theory can be used to opperationalize a study of presidential ranking total scores. If Skowronek's theory is inappropriate to use in this way, then governing cycle theory would certainly be more useful in this regard and hence be superior in its utility, even if the empirical head to head test would then be meaningless. I tackle this issue last because good argument can be made in support of both sides and resolution appears to remain difficult.

On one hand, unlike governing cycle theory – in which it clearly follows that presidents should be penalized and rewarded for the role they play in bringing about and responding to the polity threatening context of high entropy conditions – it isn't so clear within Skowronek's theory whether he thinks reconstructive presidents are playing a similarly necessary role for the polity. Indeed, in concluding that the reconstructive leadership stance needs to be abandoned, it appears that he is suggesting that regime reconstruction has always been as unnecessary as it is now antiquated. I, of course disagree, but if this were true, then, holding reconstructive warrants shouldn't necessarily ensure presidential greatness. Similarly, finding oneself in disjunctive times shouldn't doom a president to failure. Rather recognizing what contextual cards one holds and

playing them to the best extent context allows is what matters most.[28] This suggests that a disjunctive president, like perhaps John Adams, who succeeded in many ways despite his affiliation with a weakened regime is to be considered greater than a reconstructive president, like Reagan, who despite being opposed to a weakened regime did not realize how limited his success would be if he hung onto old reconstructive forms.[29] This reading also holds out the possibility that a twenty-first century president, finding themselves opposed to a weakened regime, does not have to reconstruct in the same way an Franklin Roosevelt did – if mitigating circumstance won't allow it – to be judged a success (Tulis forthcoming). Overall, this interpretation seems to be mostly consistent with the intent of Skowronek's greater argument and results in the conclusion that political time theory is not appropriate to be used (at least conventionally) in predicting presidential greatness. If this is true, then the head to head comparison between theories is not appropriate. However, governing cycle theory may still be superior for its utility in predicting presidential rankings.

The above interpretation of Skowronek's work certainly isn't the only one though. Indeed, as I have mentioned earlier, many have questioned if Skowronek's theory is deterministic. The complaint seems to be that the title of the book is backwards, and rather than being about presidents making politics, the story is about the political context that makes the president. Thus, in the most commonly held reading of the theory, it is the context of political time that has historically determined what kind of president will be made – not the other way around.[30] As such, reconstructive presidents are expected to

have a better context to prove themselves great, while disjunctive presidents have almost no chance.

At times even Skowronek seems to agree with this reading by admitting that reconstructive presidents do indeed have the best context to succeed within, while disjunctive presidents have the worst. He slips into this position by holding that disruptive presidential agency is nearly a constant. It therefore follows that given a consistently disruptive style of play, those given cards that are more favorable to this style will perform better. Since it is clear that reconstructive context normally favors disruptive style and disjunctive context is the most unfavorable context for this style, Skowronek can also be read as supporting the idea that reconstructive presidents will tend to be the greatest while disjunctive presidents will tend to be failures. My regression analysis has indeed demonstrated that there is a relationship between political time and presidential ranking total scores. Therefore, even if it is not consistent with the true intent of Skowronek's theoretical reasoning (discussed previously), there are other reasons found within his framework to believe that reconstructive presidents will be rewarded and disjunctive presidents will be penalized. In this case, it is appropriate to use his theory to model presidential ranking scores and my theory has no more utility, but is superior on the narrow empirical grounds discussed earlier.

As long as Skowronek himself remains ambiguous on his position, resolution of this debate may not be possible. In any case, receiving closure here is not central to this chapter, the main purpose of which has been to provide further support for both the validity of my case study chapters and the generalizability of my governing cycle theory.

Therefore, it may be sufficient to not worry about resolving these contending readings of Skowronek's theory. In taking my leave, I then shift gears and move from reviewing the results of my head to head contest to discussing my final conclusions within this dissertation.

[1] A similar strategy, using a time-series design might be able to be used to test Schlesinger's contention that rankings are very often a function of the perennial alternation of private interest and public purpose, which suggests that "presidential reputations decline as the opposing mood takes over, only to climb again when the original mood regains the ascendancy" (1986: 373). There are greater methodological difficulties in this sort of design, including having to compare differently constructed presidential ranking surveys across time. While there is most certainly some truth to the contention that rankings ebb and flow over time, impressionistic examination of 12 other polls reveals a striking continuity of rankings, with most fluctuation occurring in vary narrow bands of variance (ie:Washington has been rated as high as #1 and as low as #4). Mood cycles like Schlesinger's (or Merrill, Grofman, and Brunell's (2008)) would then only have a relative impact on presidential ranking scores.

[2] It has been suggested to me that change in the era's presidential percentage of the two party vote might provide another dependent variable across the ages. However, there are problems with this data. First, it there is theoretical reason to suspect that high entropy conditions reveal themselves after and despite electoral victories. Only the greatest presidents would expect to benefit from being elected under high entropy conditions, the worst presidents get elected before the condition comes about … leaving no trace in the electoral record of their lack of success. Thus, the measure may be inappropriate. Second, mass electoral data does not go back to Washington's election and only becomes reliable by the 1820s. Third, visual examination of data (in cross-tab format) does not suggest a statistically significant relationship between percentage of the vote and entropy will be found.

[3] Any model specification that includes a variable which operationalizes governing cycle theory would have endogeneity problems with a measure (of a dependent variable) that derived from the pattern of alternating partisan control over governing institutions. Both measures have the same referent.

[4] I only discuss the particular critiques of this genre of polls and the survey instrument itself. By definition, one general limitation of almost any 'expert' poll is its small sample size. I do note that other presidential ranking surveys have polled several hundred experts with little difference in result from the C-SPAN survey relied on here (Maranell 1970 [n=571]; Murray-Blessing 1982 [n=846]).

[5] The 2009 Nobel Peace Prize comes to mind as evidence of the liberal awarding of credit for aspirational excellence.

[6] As I discuss in the conclusion, they try and do this within the C-SPAN survey and there is almost no variance between evaluation on the *context* dimension and the *final score* (correlation at the .99 level). Without theoretical grounding to evaluate context it thus appears that experts add almost nothing by answering this question in a way that almost perfectly summarizes their total evaluation. See the discussion section of this chapter for more on this.

[7] Arthur Schlesinger Jr. recounts how JFK once "jokingly or half-jokingly" blamed Eisenhower's vigorous involvement in the 1962 mid-term election on his father's 1962 poll, which in ranking Ike 22nd inspired the General to become "mad about his saving his reputation." Quotes are from Schlesinger, Arthur. Jr. 1965. *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. Boston: Houton Mifflin. 474-475.

[8] Theodore Roosevelt, Calvin Coolidge, Harry Truman, and Lyndon Johnson all sought to be elected in their own right after ascending to the presidency (and succeeded in doing so) … even though none of them chose to seek reelection after serving their own full term.

[9] A short list of the possible attempts at rehabilitating service includes: John Quincy Adams many years of service in the House of Representatives, Howard Taft's notable tenure as Chief Justice, Richard Nixon's courting of "the elder statesman" role, Jimmy Carter's humanitarian efforts, and Bill Clinton's dual role as darling of the Davos crowd and champion of his wife's political career.

[10] Grover Cleveland served two non-consecutive terms a president, and was thus the 22nd and 24th presidents of the United States. In the C-SPAN survey, Cleveland is rated only once creating the discrepancy between 42 individuals serving in 43 presidencies. I address other problems created by this peculiarity later in this chapter.

[11] The ten dimensions are: "Public Persuasion," "Crisis Leadership," "Economic Management," "Moral Authority," "International Relations," "Administrative Skills," "Relations with Congress," "Vision / Setting an Agenda," "Pursued Equal Justice for All," "Performance Within Context of Times." Each dimension is measured upon a 0-100 continuum. The final ranking of each president is determined by reference to a "Total Score" that sums these 10 scores (min possible 0, max possible 1000).

[12] While I later argue that the effort to control for context mostly fails, it is only through inclusion of this question that this method can be proven not to effectively ameliorate the concern. This finding, in itself, represents a small advance in social scientific research. My finding this in no way threatens the regression analysis which controls for context.

[13] For this first-cut analysis I elect to stick with the additive formula C-SPAN uses in determining total score. ie: I do not weight any of the categories and treat them as equally important.

[14] The exception was the Wall Street Journal's 2005 survey, in which Grant shot up to 29th out of 40. This suggests that Grant's reputation may now be on the rise.

[15] Even through 'data-mining' techniques, I could not come close to finding a way to specify a variable that accounted for the impact of economic downturns on the final score. As my measure, I used the historical onset and duration of recessions and depressions and tried multiple coding schemes. It appears that across history there is no relationship between economic downturns and total score. So, I dropped the variable from further consideration.

[16] The wartime presidents are: Madison, Polk, Lincoln, McKinley, Wilson, FDR, Truman, LBJ, Nixon, G.H.W. Bush, and G.W. Bush.

[17] I include FDR as a bi-polar superpower president because by 1944 it had become apparent this was true.

[18] My discrete measure for *activist* was highly and significantly correlated (.75 at the .001 level of confidence) with the continuous "pursued justice for all" measure that was 1 of 10 factors going into the presidential *total score*.

[19] The only other variables with correlation issues are the *multi-term* and *entropy* variables. They are moderately correlated = .471 at the .01 level of confidence (2 tailed test). As they are theoretically distinct measures, I keep both in the specification.

[20] This variable attempts to give credit to presidents who in their own contemporary's eyes were successful enough to warrant winning reelection. I give FDR double the credit for being the only president to be reelected more than once. This assumes that there is no extra return for being reelected after the second time.

[21] Cleveland failed to form a new governing majority in his second non-consecutive term and thus served in the high entropy conditions that started under William Harrison. Here he should receive a penalty of -1.

His first presidency was not under high entropy conditions and he should receive no bonus or penalty here (0).

[22] I defend my stance on the rise of high entropy conditions during B. Harrison's administration in the fifth chapter.

Skowronek clearly views Franklin Pierce presidency as being disjunctive, but does not include any discussion of Buchanan's presidency in the chapter on the pre-Civil War disjunction. Indeed all that is written about "Old Buck" Buchanan's presidency is contained in a few sentences. One reference compares Hoover to him… "(Hoover) had little more success in political leadership than James Buchanan, for, like Buchanan, was he was inextricably tied to governmental commitments that events were calling into question" (1993: 262). In another Buchanan is contrasted with Polk, who "unlike Buchanan… came to power with a potent political warrant for completing work on a long-established party agenda" (14). Why Hoover earns a chapter on his disjunctive leadership and Buchanan is scarcely mentioned remains a good question. What is Buchanan if not also disjunctive? In terms of my theory it is clear, if high entropy conditions appeared under Pierce they didn't just disappear… they persisted until politics was reordered.

Skowronek has previously written about George W. Bush's first term in terms of his challenge as an "orthodox innovator" (2005). However, given the developments within Bush's second term it seems clear that, within Skowronek's terms, his presidency became disjunctive. Within the terms of my theory it does appear that entropy spiked during Bush's second term.

[23] It appears Skowronek has come around a bit to accepting Reagan as a successful reconstructive president (2005, 2008), but he seems adamant in excluding the others.

[24] Consistent with Skowronek's logic, but no where directly addressed or implied by him, one could argue that it was the Constitutional Convention that repudiated the old regime (Articles of Confederation) and reconstructed. This would leave Washington as an affiliate of the convention's repudiators charged to innovate within an orthodoxy that had no firm form yet. Through this interpretation, Washington would get a score of zero (0) in my coding scheme. My counter interpretation is included in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

I ran the regressions in accordance with all three coding schemes to ensure that my choice here did not make a substantive difference in the results of the later head to head test with Skowronek and it did not.

[25] Robert Luskin is fond of using this phrase in his graduate statistics seminar at the University of Texas at Austin.

[26] Coding Washington as a two (2) on the *founder* measure does 'solve' the mystery as to why he was underrated by my model. It does not impact the statistical significance of any of the explanatory variables in the specification and nudges up the model fit statistic .08.

[27] When the "Pursued Justice for All" ("PJFA") scores are subtracted from the C-SPAN survey's *total score* and the measure is added as an explanatory variable to the model, it is significant at the .001 level. Its coefficient in this regression analysis is 2.9 meaning that when modeled every point of *Pursued Justice for All* (*PJFA*) is predicted to be worth almost 3 points in the *total score* (which now has a maximum of 900). This suggests that Buchanan's low score of 17 on the *PJFA* measure really cost him 220 points in comparison with Lincoln's 94 score… not the mere 77 points suggested when "PJFA" is used as a component of the *total score*. To put this in other terms, progressive bias appears to act as a multiplier adding two further points for every one point scored over the average and subtracting two further points for every one point scored below the average.

[28] I thank Jeff Tulis for our discussions helping me clarify my thoughts on this reading of Skowronek. Whatever errors remain are mine.

[29] While I may personally reject this reading of Reagan, I do think it is consistent with the intent of Skowronek's work.

[30] Skowronek might argue that political context used to structure presidential performance, but no longer does due to the waning of political time.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

"In the world of eternal return the weight of unbearable responsibility lies heavy upon every move we make."

~ Milan Kundera, in the *Unbearable Lightness of Being*

In this dissertation I have provided argument in support of the thesis that the broad contours of American political development can be best explained by a new theory of governing cycles. This theory is rooted in a broad, systemic, view of the polity as well as in historical-institutionalist insights that explore how political competition is uniquely shaped in America. Because the United States constitutional structure uniquely combines a two party system with a separation of powers scheme, early controllers of governing institutions – those who are able to define what political conflict is about, assemble a majority electoral coalition, and institutionalize their priorities and advantage – are able to lock-in their authority and preferences for long periods of time. This results in several outcomes.

First, it provides the governing majority the ability to set pathways and then block change; allowing them to steer development generally in their favored direction for as long as a generation. This, second, provides the stability the system was designed for. Third, however, it (unintentionally) makes it nearly impossible for anyone to reorder politics and dissipate systemic entropy that, over time, manifests itself in increasingly inefficacious coalitional and institutional arrangements.

It is the governing majority's necessary appeal to secondary factional members within their coalition – normally for the energy they need to retain control over at least one legislative veto holding institution – that ultimately increases entropy to the point that undermines their dominance. At this historically contingent tipping point, the opposition begins acting responsibly by repudiating the governing majority for "legitimacy" and "capacity" that have arisen in the polity. This paints the majority as being both captured by extremists and forming an impediment to progress and necessary change, and drives politics into crisis – which further causes entropy to spike. This opens an opportunity for politics to be reordered.

Within this reordering opportunity, attempts are made to form a new governing majority by first shifting the main axis of partisan conflict (Schattschneider 1960) and then "outflanking" political opponents to assemble a new majority coalition (Miller and Schofield 2003, 2008).[1] If these efforts are successful, and effective control over the Presidency and Congress is gained, opposition leaders can then attempt to reorder or "reconstruct" politics by institutionalizing their partisan advantage and preferences and turning path dependent processes to their favor (Skowronek 1993).

If the opposition succeeds in this whole reordering enterprise in a straightforward manner several things happen: First, they form a new governing majority. Second, they reduce systemic entropy. Third, they shift developmental pathways and establish a new status quo. This sequence of events is what I show occurred when Andrew Jackson and the Democrats had the opportunity to, and succeeded in, reordering politics in the late 1820s and early 1830s. This, I argue, is a typical example of a non-contentious case,

such as the Jeffersonian, Radical Republican, and New Deal Democrat reordering, that unfolded in a straightforward manner. Furthermore, I use this example to suggest that the early Federalists succeeded in this way as well.

I also uniquely argue that if opposition leaders fail to complete all of the reordering tasks, development proceeds upon more complex and protracted pathways. In such cases entropy continues to increase, the status quo is not reordered, and unexpected outcomes may therefore be produced. Specifically, there may be: more than one administration involved in reconstructing; extension of the previous partisan majority's dominance through coalitional expansion; and / or more than one election that clearly shifts power – or none at all. These are the things that I show happened in the contentious "System of 1896" case when Cleveland and Bryan missed their opportunity and McKinley and T. Roosevelt then succeeded in reordering politics. This case is crucial for my theory generating project for two reasons. First, it explains an outcome not predicted by Skowronek's political time theory. Second, it further suggests a new interpretation for the late twentieth century's missing / long "sixth party system" realignment – in which Goldwater, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter failed in their attempts, and Reagan succeeded in reordering politics.

Using governing cycle theory to recast the Federalist, System of 1896, and Reagan eras then allows me to operationalize regression analysis, as part of a mixed method research design. My findings show that the key variable, *entropy*, is a statistically and substantively significant predictor of presidential ranking scores and therefore demonstrates that my historical work is valid and my theory is generalizable to

all of American political development. This quantitative work also suggests that my new formulations predict presidential rankings better than Skowronek's theory can.

In this final chapter, I examine the importance of the governing cycle within American politics. Here I focus on drawing out implications by evaluating the cycle in terms of the opportunity it provides the polity to periodically respond to the accumulated challenges associated with entropy. This draws from conceptions of historical analysis suggested by A.J. Toynbee in his multi-volume opus: *A Study of History* (1934), and highlights that both prospects and dangers exist within the governing cycle. Key to this discussion are two conclusions. First, it is necessary for the health of the American polity for politics to periodically be reordered successfully. Outright failure to reorder thus constitutes a polity threatening development. Second, political reordering is only sufficient for the long term health of the polity when it preserves the élan and self-determination necessary to enable future successful reordering responses. There are a therefore a number of "false moves" that must be guarded against. Chief amongst them is idolization of a particular institutional solution to the reordering challenge. In the modern context, I warn that the institutional solution to be guarded against may be the welfare state.

The Importance of the Governing Cycle within American Politics

I model my approach to gleaning greater insight on the role that the governing cycle plays in American politics on one derived from British historian, Arnold Toynbee, whose multi-volume *A Study of History* (1934) has, perhaps, best been summed up as a

"search for the patterns of genesis, growth, and breakdown" (Gergen 1961: 9).[2] Through Toynbee, one not only finds great insight into the developmental trajectories of over twenty civilizations, but also a nuanced meta-view of historical processes, which provides a universal framework for how to think about developmental patterns across long expanses of time.[3] I therefore adapt it for use in this conclusion.

Toynbee's approach holds that leading agents, acting at a series of what we would now call critical junctures (Collier and Collier 1991), propel a social system's development through time. This serial progression, which I will link to each reordering within the governing cycle, he terms "challenge and response."[4] In many ways, Toynbee's concept of challenge and response is quite compatible with my governing cycle theory. Both are focused, in part, on institutional transformation from a broad systemic perspective. In addition, each holds that growth and breakdown (of civilizations and governing majorities respectively)[5] are best understood in terms of reordering within a cyclical temporal logic. Furthermore, both approaches address the defects of the overly biographical "great man" school and the overly myopic "period" schools of history.[6]

Indeed, according to Toynbee, one of the period perspective's many shortcomings is the fact that it looks at development in terms of a series of incremental segments of time. This precludes one from seeing that developmental paths are often cut short by critical events,[7] only to proceed forward by shooting off in multiple new and often unexpected directions. Thus, the history turns out not to unfold in a stately manner, turning across time like a meandering river, but rather appears to unfold disjointedly like branches of tree shooting out in multiple directions in search of sunlight – some of which

fail while others succeed – only to throw out their own branches and go through the process again. Toynbee therefore asks: "Have we not been guilty of applying to historical thought, which is the study of living creatures, a scientific method of thought which has been devised for thinking about inanimate nature?" (Vol. 1: 271) In response, Toynbee offers an alternate approach to historical analysis that captures the multiplicity of causative factors, the centrality of agency, and the possibility of many alternate developmental paths.

Toynbee invites us to view historical development as a series of "encounters." What is distinct about each of these encounters is that, within them, the reaction of actors to their environment is in part decided by psychological factors that, in his mind, are inherently impossible to "weigh and measure" (Vol. 1: 300). The only way, then, to capture the essence of the encounter is to think of it in terms of what Toynbee terms "challenge and response." In describing his idea of challenge and response Toynbee writes:

> The effect of a cause is inevitable, invariable, and predictable. But the initiative that is taken by one or other of the live parties to an encounter is not a cause; it is a challenge. Its consequence is not an effect; it is a response. Challenge-and-response resembles cause-and-effect only in standing for a sequence of events. The character of the sequence is not the same. Unlike the effect of a cause, the response to a challenge is not predetermined, it is not necessarily uniform in all cases, and is therefore intrinsically unpredictable (1972: 97).

Thus, challenge and response is the meta-level process that carries an institution, such as a civilization or polity, from challenge through response to further challenge via the agency of its leading members who must convince the multitudes to follow their example. It is a dynamic, echoing a language similar to cyclical theory scholars – including myself – which witnesses institutions cycle from differentiation, to integration, to differentiation again.[8]

Central to this framework is thus the idea that social systems flourish and decline as a function of how well their leading members manage to navigate their periodically occurring opportunities to vigorously respond to societal challenges. This suggests a few things about the necessity and sufficiency of the dynamic. First, for the immediate health of the social system, it is ***necessary*** for leaders to master each challenge with a successful response. Otherwise, Toynbee concludes, failure to respond to a challenge leads to social system breakdown of one of two types: disintegration or ossification (Vol. 3).

Second for the future health of the social system, only a response that preserves the self-determination of leading actors is ***sufficient*** to produce the type of healthy development that leads to further challenges and successful responses. Truly successful responses therefore have a certain option creating and preserving nature, without which development turns down a dead end cul-de-sac. Toynbee tells us that the dead end turn can happen in various but predictable ways. It can happen when a challenge is so sever as to require a "tour de force" type of response that exhausts the respondents to the point of arresting their potential for further development.[9] The turn down the cul-de-sac can also happen when a response strips the respondents of their creative élan via a number of

false moves.[10] These false moves include coming to depend on the same group to lead multiple responses, idolizing a particular responsive technique or institutional solution developed in a previous response, falling into militarism, or becoming so intoxicated with victory as to pursue inordinate aims or use illegitimate means (Vol. 4). In such dead end turn scenarios, the response taken either inspires future respondents to "rest on their oars" or is insufficient to provoke future challenges for the social system. Either way, it is always possible that a successful response to particular challenge turns out to be a false move in terms of long run development.

Translated into the specific terms of my governing cycle theory, Toynbee suggests that the reordering opportunity, which represents the opening for leading societal agents to respond to high entropy conditions via new governing majority formation, contains both great prospects and dangers. The first thing to note is that every challenge to build a new governing majority must be seen as containing the American polity's best chance to address the buildup of systemic entropy through reordering and returning coalitional and institutional relationships to efficacious positions.[11] This gives leaders the chance to bring governing capacity better in line with societal needs and restore legitimacy and democratic buy-in. Yet, the flip-side of this prospect must also be acknowledged. Here it must be recognized that the reordering opportunity also represents a time of danger for the polity, as there is always the possibility that the society can fail to respond in a way that is *necessary* for continued growth. This would leave the polity in a permanent high entropy condition of political crisis. Furthermore, it must be remembered that even a successful reordering might be dangerous if it is not

sufficient to maintain self-determination. Let me now examine these prospects and dangers in a little greater detail using the historical record and some hypothetical cases to highlight what Toynbee's approach suggests about the role the governing cycle plays in American politics.

Prospects

As for prospects, there are three dimensions on which the "good" of the polity can be thought to be advanced when the reordering opportunity is used successfully to respond to high entropy conditions. These dimensions include promoting democratic *buy-in*, practicing practical governance by providing *stability* and closing *capacity gaps*, and reaffirming the republican values of anti-authoritarianism and self-rule through the addressing of *legitimacy gaps*.

Along the first democratic dimension, successful new governing majority formation must be thought to force new leaders to assemble a new majority coalition and to formulate a new (or at least improved) governing philosophy that cleaves conflict in a new and more appropriate way for the times. These tasks both lead to mass democratic *buy-in* to the American political system by forcing reordering elites to make more responsible appeals to the people for support, a process that often draws in new voters and underrepresented groups to the new majority coalition (Beck 1974; Nardulli 1995). In this way everyone from early Federalists, to southern agrarian Jeffersonians, western middling Jacksonians, New Deal ethnic whites and labor, as well as blacks, bought into

the system by being brought into the electorate and halls of power via joining the majority coalition.

The necessary articulation of a governing philosophy and the coalition building that occurs within the reordering opportunity also results in both the promotion of – and *buy-in* to – a new set of national governing priorities and the incorporation of and prioritization of mass and organized preferences into governance. Historically, this has produced buy-in to a host of philosophies and programs. Through reordering the majority has come to by-into things as diverse as: the Federalist's veneration of a new Constitution, the "reform and retrenchment" states rights movement of Jackson, Lincoln's preservation of the Union, McKinley and T. Roosevelt's reaffirmation of a more progressive capitalism, FDR's welfare statism, and Reagan's market centered course correction. Democratic buy-in thus has the potential to help a democratic polity like the United States respond to the recurrent challenge of being grounded in the votes and values of the people.

However, all of the potential to achieve democratic buy-in during reordering does not lead me to conclude that the phenomenon is primarily a ground up, mass electorally centered dynamic. Indeed, contra to the realignment paradigm I conclude that it is leaders and not the people that organize response to high entropy conditions via attempts at new governing majority formation. While democratic appeals play a part in the dynamic because of the democratic structure of the republic, and democratic buy-in is essential to the processes, it is not the masses that call for or drive the direction of reordering. Rather it is elites who stir the people up (in repudiation of the status quo) and

then try and get ahead of them in leading a majority to sign onto a program that advances their priorities and advantage.[12]

Along the second, practical, dimension, reordering also provides for *stability* and gives leaders the best chance they often have to respond vigorously and creatively to *capacity gaps* that have opened. As I suggested at the beginning of this dissertation, in many ways the United States Constitution was created to provide the stability that was thought necessary to avoid tyranny provoking chaos and disorder (Lienesch 1988). It has mainly been the focus of this work to explore the unintended consequences that have followed from the founders succeeding in creating this stability by combining separation of powers with a two party system. However, it should not go unrecognized here that the founders did succeed in creating the kind of stability that the Federalists sought. Nor should the benefits of this stability be underappreciated. Indeed, attention must be called to the fact that the founders created a governing framework that has proven incredibly stable, only having been amended twenty-seven times in over two hundred years. Although this system witnessed one very significant (and violent) rebellion against it, and it is periodically rocked by the need to reorder politics, it unquestionably has provided the stability needed for the full release of human potential. In no small part because of its governing stability, the United States has become, arguably, the richest and strongest nation in the history of the planet.

Another prospective 'good' that can be achieved along the practical dimension occurs when reordering encourages new leaders to periodically address the very *capacity gaps* that have arisen within the polity under its remarkable stability. Closing of the

capacity gap, or what Burnham would refer to as the gap between the dynamic socio-economic sphere of the polity and its almost static political sphere, can occur when reordering locks in new majority status through the institutional building and rearranging that promotes the advantage and priorities of the new majority, allowing for new policy approaches to be tried and, ultimately, for development to proceed upon new pathways. This allows the polity to overcome some capacity issues and problems that were not (and possibly could not) be addressed under the previous governing regime – like building the welfare state in response to the shortfalls of lazier-faire industrialization, or recalibrating market relationships, lowering taxes, cutting regulation, and freeing the engines of capitalism to pay for another generation of the welfare state. Thus, from a practical perspective, reordering can serve the political system in a pragmatic sense of allowing it the space and opportunity to overcome entrenched problems via new approaches. When this is successfully accomplished, the polity is launched upon a journey of differentiation and the democratic proviso – that government must produce outcomes that serve the interests of the people – may be met.

The fact that there is great potential for leaders to use the reordering opportunity to address capacity gaps in this way should not lead to the conclusion that they actually have the ability (or tools) to succeed in what they may want to do. Indeed, as Skowronek has suggested, with the advent of the welfare state and the general thickening of institutions (and embedded protecting of interests), it may be increasingly difficult for reordering to occur. While Skowronek was, it seems, premature in issuing his warnings back in 1993 he may very well be correct in identifying a new and potentially dangerous

development that decreases the ability of leaders to accomplish what they want to (or even must) do. I will therefore further discuss the danger posed by the waning of political time later in this section.

Furthermore, just because leaders have the opportunity to reorder does not mean that we should assume that they will correctly assess what is in the polity's best interest for them to do in addressing capacity gaps. Indeed, in the upcoming section of this chapter entitled "dangers" I will discuss the possibility that reordering politicians can: 1) misdiagnose what response is necessary in face of a perceived capacity gap; and / or 2) respond by reordering primarily in pursuit of narrow partisan aims rather than broadly in terms of addressing systemic problems and lowering entropy.

Along the third, republican, dimension, reordering also forces new leaders to address *legitimacy gaps* that have arisen within the polity. As I've suggested, the opening of a legitimacy gap is so inefficacious to the governing majority that it threatens their dominance. This gap, therefore, can only be addressed by a changing of the guard that literally or symbolically purges government of the 'extreme' and 'corrupt' partisan cabal, which had been dominating politics for so long that it came to be perceived as illegitimate. In this way, whether new governing majority formation involves a shift of power from one party to the other (as it normally does) or just entails the reconstitution of partisan dominance along a new axis of conflict and coalitional arrangement (as it did in the System of 1896 case) it always serves to reaffirm America's anti-authoritarian creed (Huntington 1981).

I thus conclude that the closing of the legitimacy gap not only occurred during the periods Huntington suggests – ie: the Founding, the 1830's, the 1900s, and the 1960/70s (1981: 138) – but also during all the other reordering periods. In arguing this I assert that in every case, new governing majority formation allowed the citizenry to flex their civic muscles by following the exhortations of responsible leaders and exercising their capacity for self-rule in either removing the previous majority from power – or forcing the previously dominant party to also embrace (however awkwardly) new tenants. Closing the legitimacy gap thus provides the opportunity for leaders and citizens to rise out of their normal self-focused slumbers in response to such things as: the Anti-Sedition Acts, the Taney Court's unilateralism, the Lockner Court's long period of obstinacy, and the seemingly unending scroll of grievances against the George W. Bush administration, to vigorously pursue reforms that can be directed toward the public good.

I thus maintain that the opening of a perceived legitimacy gap is ultimately more inefficacious to the relationship between the governing majority and the polity than the opening of a capacity gap, and therefore argue that it plays a critical role in every reordering. Indeed, while realignment scholars have long linked critical elections to exogenous shocks, which can reveal economic capacity gaps, it is abundantly clear that not every severe economic downturn or foreign war causes a realignment to happen.[13] While it is obvious that the Great Depression crisis presented itself in terms of an exogenous shock that revealed a wide gap along the capacity dimension, I argue that reordering only occurred at this time because the shock occurred in conjunction with an already opening legitimacy gap. This is revealed in detailed analysis of the 1928

election, which foreshadowed the GOP's loss of legitimacy in urban centers. Evidence is therefore inconclusive that a capacity gap is sufficient, in itself, to cause a reordering opportunity to open – even in the case of the Great Depression.

Indeed, it appears that what is necessary (and possibly sufficient) for the opening of the reordering opportunity is instead the perception of a legitimacy gap. Thus, what explains the timing of the turn of the governing cycle is not the occurrence of an exogenous shock but rather endogenous processes that reveal the existence of an extreme, corrupt, or otherwise illegitimate majority – which may then be linked to and blamed for whatever capacity gaps exists. It is ultimately then the conditions under which capacity gaps reveal themselves that determine how they are perceived and reacted to. Thus, a middling, low casualty, and (at times) poorly managed military campaign – like the Spanish-American War – can, because of its timing within the governing cycle, be interpreted within the political system as an opportunity to support the governing majority and further its priorities, because both are seen as highly legitimate. Meanwhile, a middling, low casualty, and (at times) poorly managed military campaign – like the recent War in Iraq – can conversely become an opportunity to undermine a majority that is losing its legitimacy. This is not to deny that in some cases the capacity gap may be so wide as to dominate the reordering response. However, it is to conclude that it is the opening of a legitimacy gap that is necessary for, and therefore the best indicator of, the opening a reordering opportunity.

Dangers - Outright Failures and Insufficient Successes

Besides the great prospects embedded within the opportunity to form a new governing majority the opening also contains the related danger of producing conditions of permanent enervation and crisis, possibly leading to arrested development or breakdown, through failure to reorder politics. While this has never happened in the case of the American polity, Toynbee reminds us that there have been a multitude of civilizations that have, as a result of not being able to overcome their challenges, either become "arrested" (Vol. 3) – like the Polynesians or Eskimos – or experienced "breakdown" (Vol. 4) – like the Egyptians, Ancient Greeks and Romans, and Mayans. Thus, I venture the conclusion that *a polity should never allow itself to fail to form a new governing majority and successfully reorder when conditions of high entropy call for it*.

Just as successful reordering can be thought to provide the polity a means to prosper in ways that further democratic, practical, and republican ideals, outright failure should be thought to threaten along these three same dimensions of analysis. However, before exploring how outright failure could impact democratic *buy-in*, practical *stability*, prudential closing of *capacity gaps*, and reaffirming republican self-rule via the addressing of the *legitimacy gap*, I must further define the Toynbee inspired term "outright failure" In doing so, I start by contrasting it with the concept of reordering failure that I have used throughout this dissertation and end by suggesting what could happen in cases where outright failure to respond to the challenge of high entropy conditions is witnessed.

As has been articulated, reordering failure occurs when partisan leaders, who enjoy the context of high entropy conditions, are unable to complete the three tasks necessary of them to form a new governing majority. This is what I have argued occurred when Grover Cleveland and then William J. Bryan failed to create a new Democratic majority in the 1890s, as well as what happened between the Goldwater/Johnson and Carter years. Reordering failure does not, however, immediately lead to or equate with outright failure because it leaves high entropy conditions that may inspire other partisan leaders to accomplish the three tasks. When leaders later in the sequence of events, like William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt or Ronald Reagan, succeed in creating a new governing majority they respond successfully to the systemic challenge facing the polity – even if the effects of their protracted reordering are less pronounced than in cases of straightforward reordering.

However, it must be considered possible for no one to ever be able to complete the three reordering tasks and for high entropy conditions and political crisis to persist permanently. Were this to occur, outright failure could be diagnosed. While I can only speculate as to what politics under these conditions might look like, others have already provided some insights.

Stephen Skowronek has drawn attention to the idea that the waning of political time might lead to the state of perpetual preemptive politics, wherein all presidents function effectively as opposition presidents against a resilient regime (1993: 444-446). While he acknowledges that preemptive presidents are the wild-cards of history, turning in performances that have range everywhere from the good of Eisenhower to the bad of

Nixon he ultimately concludes that the state of perpetual preemption "offers reasonable prospects for presidents to get things done and shake things up" (444).

I have long found this conclusion overly optimistic (Nichols 2004). As I have previously pointed out (see also Nichols and Myers forthcoming), Skowronek's institutionally partisan perspective blinds him to the fact that the cycles of presidential leadership are not artifacts of presidential behavior. Rather the American governing cycle has systemic origins and presidents merely play an important role in providing much of the leadership that is necessary to overcome the high entropy conditions that constitutional structure repeatedly produces. Because Skowronek gets the fundamental dynamics behind the cycle wrong, it isn't surprising that he is off in his conclusions. He suggests the waning of political time (ie: the inability of presidents to reconstruct) will leave the nation in the low to moderate entropy conditions that dominate during a resilient regime. However, what my theory of the governing cycle suggests is that entropy will inevitably rise until it crosses the historically contingent threshold that encourages opposition leaders to become responsible and repudiate the majority. Once this happens, all presidents then face the challenge of responding to high entropy conditions. If they then cannot reorder, for whatever reason, politics will then become stuck in conditions that Skowronek would conceive of as "disjunctive." Skowronek has not explored this scary vision, but should given that judgment on the advisability of abandoning reconstructive politics may hinge upon it.

High entropy, disjunctive, conditions would not create the ideal political arena for the pragmatic technocrats of Skowronek's vision to ply their skills. These conditions

would not make it easy for leaders to make the case for change on "the merits of their propositions," or to succeed by fashioning ad-hoc coalitions, or find solutions through the cultivation of independent political identities – all as Skowronek hopes. Rather they would plunge the polity into prolonged political crisis where leaders fail to: 1) garner democratic buy-in to new governing philosophies and coalitional arrangements; 2) maintain the stable conditions under which domestic tranquility or prosperity are best achieved; 3) address widening capacity gaps between what the polity needs government to achieve and what it institutionally has the means to do; 4) address widening legitimacy gaps.

Such chaotic conditions of permanent high entropy conditions would not be unfamiliar to America's founders, whose own experiences under the Articles of Confederation had disabused them of the notion that the need for collective action in the face of daunting challenges is enough incentive to make necessary actions happen. Indeed, chaos weary Federalists would recognize permanent high entropy conditions, which can eventually discredit both political parties as illegitimate, as the perfect breeding ground for demagogues and tyrants. Thus outright failure in the reordering context is to be recognized not only for the conditions of high entropy that it fails to address – or the democratic, practical, and republican ideals it fails to achieve – but for the role this failure plays in setting up the conditions under which despotic leadership is likely to appear.

I therefore cannot join Professor Skowronek in his exhortations to bring the presidency of age by abandoning the very type of leadership that is necessary to redress

the conditions that, if left untreated, threatens to slide the polity into regime breakdown. Indeed, even if the "waning of political time" only leads to a lower capacity to succeed in forming a new governing majority, which tends to make the potential for reordering shallower (Orren and Skowronek 1999; Polsky 2002), or it merely increases the possibility that reordering will be more protracted (Nichols and Myers forthcoming), it seems reasonable to assume that both outcomes increase the danger of outright failing to respond to the challenge of high entropy over time. I must therefore conclude that the "thickening" of politics, with its proliferation of interests and authorities and organizational resilience of defenders of the status quo, does NOT present itself to the American polity as an adventitious prospect for presidents to attempt new leadership stances (as Skowronek tells us). Rather these modern conditions present themselves as a very great, and grave, danger to the future health of the polity.

It now becomes clear how the very stability that is produced by Constitutional structure can, ultimately, lead to chaos and regime collapse. This can occur when stability (and inability to change) produces conditions wherein it becomes impossible to address the inevitable entropy that periodically accumulates under stable conditions. When viewed through Toynbee's prism, it is thus shown how it is possible for stability to lead to the kind of outright failure to respond to the challenge of high entropy conditions that actually leads to regime disintegration.

This leads me to consider the second possibility and co-terminate danger within the opportunity to form a new governing majority and reorder politics; namely, the danger of *insufficient success*. The very term suggests that there is always a possibility of

reordering in ways that, while necessary and successful in the here and now, are ultimately insufficient in the long term because they undermine the potential to reorder in the future. In this view, the reordering opportunity contains more than just the challenge to overcome a particular and time-bound set of high entropy conditions. It also contains the more general challenge to respond in a way that sets up the ability to meet challenges in the future. In words that Toynbee borrows from Bergson, a truly successful response must therefore preserve the "élan vital" necessary to propel the challenged through their current trial without either exhausting them for the next challenge or leaving them an in equilibrium that encourages them to rest on their oars (Vol. 3). To be sufficient, in the long run, reordering must then preserve political self-determination for the future.

If Skowronek is right, and the building of the welfare state comes to thicken politics to the point that I argue permanent high entropy conditions would be arrived at, the New Deal and / or Reagan reorderings may turn out to have been insufficiently successful in the long run – no matter how necessary they were at the time. This interpretation, describing a turn down a developmental dead end, could be explained in two broad ways. First, the New Deal reordering could be seen as a "*tour de force*" type of response to a challenge that was so severe that it exhausted the respondents to the point of arresting their potential for further development. However, this broad explanation seems unlikely given the fact that the American polity remained dynamic well after the 1930s and Reagan was eventually able to reorder and revitalize the welfare state through neo-liberal reform when it was necessary.

Second, the New Deal and / or Reagan Revolution might eventually be seen as having been false moves that stripped respondents of their creative élan over time. The usual set of explanations in this situation includes:

1) *coming to depend on the same group to lead multiple responses*;

2) *idolizing a responsive technique developed in previous reorderings*;

3) idolizing a particular institutional solution resultant of a reordering;

4) *falling into militarism*; or,

5) *becoming so intoxicated with victory as to pursue inordinate aims or use illegitimate means,*

While it is beyond the scope of this project to issue firm judgment as to whether or not any of these specific false moves can already be declared to have turned APD down a blind alley, I will take a moment to reflect on the possibilities.

Before undertaking this thought experiment, it should be noted that I have not concluded that development has already, irreversibly, turned down a dead end. Rather I see myself as undecided on the question at this time, and I continue to take the possibility seriously. Indeed, the purpose of this examination is to bring attention to the dangers of false moves by exploring which are most likely to contribute to an insufficient reordering success. In my view, it may not be too late to address false moves made in the past or to avoid making false moves in the present or future.

Let me first start from the back of the pack and discuss the two false moves that I think are both least likely to have already resulted in a dead end turn and are less likely to do so in the future. The first possibility, *falling into militarism*, could occur if thought of

in terms of Eisenhower's warning about the "military-industrial complex," or perhaps an armed "clash of civilizations" with the Islamic or Sino world (Huntington 1996). Yet, unlike Europe, which has witnessed successive attempts by the French, German, and Soviet / Russians to impose unification at the point of a bayonet, the United States has maintained healthy civil-military relations internally and been a reluctant hegemonic power internationally. I am therefore fairly confident in concluding that reordering has yet to drive American into the false move of falling into militarism and doubt that the risk is very high in the future. I do, however, admit to uncertainty as to whether this false move could enter through the back door of the next wrong turn.

It also seems certain that those that have reordered in America's past have never *become so intoxicated with victory as to pursue inordinate aims or use illegitimate means.* Indeed, unlike the Papacy, which Toynbee tells us succeeded in raising itself up on its spiritual prominence only to fall from the heights due to its earthly wickedness (Vol. 4), it appears that the United States is protected from these extremes by the genius of separation of powers. They help to prevent the pursuit of inordinate aims by virtue of the very means of governance they proscribe once electoral victory has been secured.

Although I am also fairly confident in concluding that this particular false move has not yet been the source of an insufficient success in reordering, I am less certain that it does not remain a danger. Circumstances that call for the exercise of emergency powers, like war, economic crisis, and – perhaps in the future – perception of looming environmental catastrophe or the bankruptcy of the welfare state, will always tempt those in power to abandon the constitutional balance in the name of exigency. Furthermore,

while I am not one to view the U.S. Constitution as a brittle document that will shatter if at all bent, it remains obvious that a completely elastic, living document, conception of the document could dangerously open the way for pursuit of inordinate aims. Indeed, at some point of looseness, this interpretive theory becomes an illegitimate means itself that can hollow out everything but the form of the Constitution. It is therefore possible that given some combination of exigent circumstances and a very flexible reading of the Constitution, illegitimate means could be used for inordinate aims – such as the false move of establishing a "universal" or "security" state. While unlikely, this development could certainly bring a turn to militarism in through the back door and send the polity down a cul-de-sac.

Coming to depend on the same group to lead multiple responses, seems at first glance, not to be a very likely false move for the American polity. Indeed, having a two party system in the United States has almost always ensured that each reordering is lead by a different and opposing partisan coalition or group. The dynamics of new governing majority formation have also ensured that a new majority coalition is formed in every case. It thus seems that constitutional structure mitigates against this type of failure, and has helped the American polity avoiding falling into the trap of relying on the same group to lead multiple responses.

One can easily see how this could be the source of a false move, however. Indeed, given what I have argued about path dependency and the status quo preserving motivations of the majority, it becomes quite clear that it would be very difficult for leaders of the most recent reordering to be the leaders of the next. This did happen in the

"System of 1896" case, demonstrating that it is possible, but few would argue that the resultant simultaneous operation of "Lockner" and "progressive" reform eras produced much more than a muddle.[14]

Besides the possibility of back-to-back reordering under the leadership of the same partisan banner, there is another possible way in which the American system remains vulnerable to relying on the same group to lead multiple responses. This occurs when the same faction remains dominant within the coalition of a political party for an extended period of time. It might then become the case that the Republicans repeated reliance on their pro-business faction or the Democrats repeated reliance on their liberal faction could, in time, effectively return to power the same group that lead the reordering two generations previous. Of course, this problem is mitigated by the fact that leading factions are embedded within coalitions that both constrain them and change composition over time. Therefore, repeated reliance on the same factional leaders within political parties becomes most dangerous either if coalitions do not force leading factions to compromise or if coalitional composition really does not change much over time. In either of these cases, factions could use the political parties to pursue narrow, inordinate, and extreme aims or remain locked-in to past solutions.[15] If this lock-in occurs, then reliance on the same group leads to one of the false moves associated with idolization. This may be the more likely scenario, as it is only natural to assume that factional groups will stick with and idolize the response that brought them to prominence in the past, even when what they idolize becomes part of the challenge that needs to be overcome in the future.

To explore this possibility further, it must be noted that invariably the seeds of future problems are sown in the very successes used to overcome current and past problems. Thus exist the twin false moves of idolization, namely: *idolization of a technique developed in a previous reordering and idolization of particular institutional solution developed in a previous reordering*. Of all the false moves, the second seems to be the most likely sources of dead end turn in the American case. However, before I examine it, I must deal with Skowronek's differing conclusion. Indeed, within the terms of Toynbee's warnings, Skowronek can already be interpreted as warning that the practice of reconstructive politics is a technique that, while useful in the past, needs not to be idolized by presidents any longer.

I have, of course, come to disagree with Skowronek on this particular assessment because I view reordering / reconstructive politics in the context of being a necessary responsive technique to the high entropy conditions that periodically come to plague the American polity. As long as the underlying problem exists, there must be some technique used to respond to its challenge. I would certainly welcome Professor Skowronek's thoughts on alternative ways to respond to high entropy conditions. However, since he has not yet contemplated the challenges of presidential leadership in these terms, and seems to equate the waning of political time with a state of permanent opposition rather than disjunction, his past writings suggest few viable options. However, if I am right and presidents must periodically respond to high entropy conditions, there appears to be two possible solutions consistent with Skowronek's thought. These are: first, keep improve the reordering / reconstructive ability of

presidents, or, second, rewrite the U.S. Constitution to remove the systemic origins of high entropy conditions. Ultimately, I do not hold that the reconstructive / reordering technique has become idolized, nor do I think this will be the source of a false move in the future. If anything, abandonment of the technique would ensure that an outright failure to reorder would occur.

Idolization may still be the source of a false move if a particular institutional solution becomes fixated upon. In the modern American context, I argue that idolization of the welfare state is the particular institutional solution that is most likely to lead to a turn down a developmental dead-end. Although I remain open to further debate on the idea, I am not insisting that this has yet happened. However, I am convinced that the scenario cannot be dismissed as a real possibility. If this were ever to become the case and the welfare state were to become idolized as a particular institutional solution that could not be altered or abandoned even when it prevented or perverted necessary reordering, this would substantiate the conservative's general case against the welfare state (Hayek, 1960). Indeed, application of both Toynbee's analytical framework and my governing cycle theory might suggest a more nuanced reading of Hayek indictment against the budget deranging, vigor sapping, qualities of the welfare state.

Such a synthesis might argue that it is possible for the welfare state to be, at one point in time, part of a necessary and successful reordering response to the ills of an economic depression in an industrialized era, like it was in the New Deal. At a later point in time, it is also possible that the welfare state could become a drag on economic productivity, requiring it to be neo-liberally reformed (not abandoned as some

conservatives called for), like it was in the Reagan Revolution reordering. Furthermore, it is possible that the neo-liberally reformed welfare state could itself become in need of reform. If at this time, the reordering of this governing regime were to be guided by principles that idolized a particular (and anachronistic) institutional solution, then we would certainly need to worry about a developmental cul-de-sac being entered.

This could happen if neo-liberal reforms of the welfare state were rolled back and development was to proceed upon the same assumptions and pathways that undermined the welfare state's viability previously. In such case, it would be as if nothing was learned back in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the welfare state's limits revealed themselves. By the 1980s, I argue, that the Republicans actually succeeded (despite their own rhetoric to the contrary) in finding a new way to continue to pay for the welfare safety net by letting the market engine run less encumbered.

Even though the limitations of this strategy have now revealed themselves as well, the danger associated with idolizing an old institutional solution to a new problem still remains. This is especially true because it appears that the Democrats that won a reordering opportunity in 2008 are depending upon the same liberal factional group, which led previous reordering responses, to provide leadership for the challenges of today.[16] If they were to idolize an old institutional solution to the new problem of responding to the limitations of the neo-institutionally reformed welfare state, they might (as Hayek warned) encumber the polity in tax burdens and budget deficits and enervate the citizenry by encouraging dependency. In such a worse case scenario, the ability to reorder would be undermined and a turn down a developmental dead end might be

diagnosed to have happened "back" in 2008. Therefore, it only seems prudential to suggest that the ultimate challenge in today's reordering opportunity is to be able to answer the question of what comes after the neo-liberally reformed welfare state -- without succumbing to the partisan temptation of idolizing a past solution that secures a new governing majority but ultimately turns out to produce an insufficient reordering success for the polity.[17]

In my conclusion, I have adapted Arnold J. Toynbee's historical method of thought and applied it to governing cycle theory. In doing so, I have demonstrated that each iteration of new governing majority formation can be thought of in terms of being a "response" to the "challenge" of high entropy conditions. As such, I have argued that it is absolutely necessary for the health of the polity for leaders to periodically succeed in reordering politics. When they succeed there a number of dimensions on which the health of the polity is benefited. However, should they ever outright fail to reorder, permanent high entropy conditions will prevail. Furthermore, I have argued that each reordering response must be sufficient to provoke further challenges while preserving the creative élan necessary for the next response. There are, therefore, a number of false moves that may lead to necessary success in the short run, but which are insufficient and threaten to turn development down a blind alley in the long term. I did not conclude that America has taken a false turn yet, but warned that there are a number of possibilities to guard against. Foremost amongst these dangers may be idolization of the welfare state.

[1] The verbiage for this paragraph and the next two are modified from Nichols (2009).

[2] The "plan of the book" in Toybee's, *A Study of History* is: volume II= The Geneses of Civilizations, volume III = The Growths of Civilizations, and volume IV = The Breakdowns of Civilizations. See also Nichols 2004 and Nichols and Franklin 2007 for earlier (abortive) attempts to integrate the use of Toynbee into developmental analysis. These attempts both form the foundation for this section's analysis and are used in modified form to explain Toynbee's approach.

[3] A good treatment of Toynbee's place within the literature and tradition of universal history is provided in Engel-Janosi's essay (1961). See also the rest of Gargan (1961) as well as Montagu (1956) and Thompson (1985).

[4] Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 1, 271. Here "challenge and response" is characterized as the interaction of a multitude of causative variables, which Toynbee likens to a complex encounter rather than the simple interaction of two inhuman forces (ie: simple cause and effect).

[5] Toynbee argues that the proper unit of analysis for his meta-historical comparative study is the civilization not the nation state (Vol. 1). I do not read anything to suggest that his challenge and response framework will fail to work at lower levels. Indeed, what is most salient about the formulation is that it allows for human agency to be the crucial factor in the dynamic (Vol. 2).

[6] See Skowronek as well for explicit discussion of the shortfalls of these approaches (1993).

[7] It is clear that Toynbee often views these critical events in terms of what we might call exogenous shocks. However, it is also obvious that he views the psychological aspect of these events as the most important, thus leading this reader to conclude that it is often endogenous processes and dynamics that are most critical in provoking many challenges.

[8] In addition to my own theory, both Burnham's view of realignment and Skowronek's view of regime building is premised upon a cycle of disruption or breaking away from long-established status quos, followed by consolidation of new forms of control; whose effectiveness eventually dissipates and gives cause for the next disruption. (See Burnham 1970: 10, 175-193; Skowronek, 1993: 4-17, 49-52; however also see Polsky 2009 for a critique of the view that partisan regimes should be seen this way.)

[9] As examples of arrested cultures, Toynbee suggests that the Eskimos, Polynesians, and Spartans all responded via tour-de-force type exertions that left them rigid and caste ridden. He compares arrested societies to both those of ants and bees as well as those in Utopias, remarking that Utopias are usually products of societies in decline attempting to arrest their fall by pegging society to its actual level at the moment.

[10] The use of the term élan is purposive as Toynbee uses Bergson's term "élan vital" to describe the nature of successful responses in his discussion of the growth of civilizations (Vol. 3).

[11] Current U.S. Constitutional structure almost guarantees the build up of entropy under a particular governing majority which thereby challenges the polity to periodically reorder politics thru the formation of a new governing majority. Scholars have long been aware of the degree the Constitution limits change (for example see Levinson 2006). Some have reached the conclusion that it also structures opportunities for change (see Ackerman 1991). However, I am unfamiliar with anyone besides Burnham (1970) and myself that argues that it is precisely by limiting change that the Constitution ensures that opportunity for change is structured.

[12] It is entirely possible for leaders to miscalculate what the effect of 'stirring-up' the people will be on their own political fortunes. For example, those ante-bellum Democrats who thought that polarizing the country along the issue of slavery would help their personal rise within the ranks of the party, were proven wrong when they lost control of events. Yet, other leaders, like Howard Dean – whose efforts to stir up the people in his own personal pursuit of the presidency in 2004 was unsuccessful – might still succeed in starting a process that other politicians end up taking advantage of in the future. Thus, it may often be the case that the particular leaders who start the fires that stir up the people may not be the leaders who take advantage of the crisis conditions to lead successful reordering. This suggests that in very few cases do the people either rise up without leadership or, once stirred, settle on a particular course without leadership.

[13] I remind that I could not find a way to construct a statistically significant variable to account for depressions/recessions/panics in my sixth chapter's regression analysis.

[14] I've intentionally juxtaposed the two discordant terms "Lockner Era" and "progressive reform" to highlight the incongruence of these two overlapping events. Orren and Skowronek (1999) have argued that this muddle demonstrates there was no "System of 1896."

[15] See Lowi (1979, 58-61) on "the costs of interest group pluralism" for some insightful thoughts along these lines. I thank Dean Burnham for this observation.

[16] If the Republicans were to be leading the current reordering opportunity, they would have to guard against idolization of the market solution. Yet, it is not their turn and it is almost too much to ask of a long dominant governing majority to come up with creative alternatives to the program that keeps them in power. When they do, the exercise proves counter-productive. Ie: the creative formulation of a new Bush doctrine. Therefore, it is inevitably the responsibility of the opposition to think creatively while guarding against their own idolizing tendencies.

[17] The fact the governing cycle allows, and perhaps even encourages, political reordering to be of the kind that is necessary but ultimately insufficient demonstrates the limits of the American polity's most powerful tool of renewal.

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